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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to be a practical guide for designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction and services for students with disabilities. The first section, "Leadership and Collaboration," offers a conceptual framework for program leadership, a program vision and descriptions, strategies for interagency collaboration, and strategies for family collaboration. The second section, "Program Development and Evaluation," provides assistance in seven specific areas fundamental to creating strong instruction and services. These include individual educational plans, curriculum adaptation and development, effective instruction, including and supporting students with disabilities within general education, positive behavior management, secondary education transition programs, and program evaluation. The third section, "Professional Development and Support," contains four chapters designed to help leaders in special education create supportive working environments for teachers and service providers as well as to facilitate professional growth among staff members. These four chapters include information on staff development, teacher support, teacher collaboration, and teacher and personnel evaluation. (References accompany each chapter.) (JDD)

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# *Program Leadership for Serving Students with Disabilities*

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# *Program Leadership for Serving Students with Disabilities*

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# Introduction

Over the past two decades, federal and state laws and regulations have significantly influenced the provision of services to students with disabilities. Large scale policy changes were made in local school divisions in response to these legislative requirements. Although compliance with laws and regulations is critical to providing access to services, it does not guarantee that students with disabilities will receive quality instruction and services.

Administrators, teachers, and service-providers want to create high quality instruction and services that enable students with disabilities to succeed in school and in life beyond school. This manual is designed to be a practical guide for school personnel as they design, implement, and evaluate instruction and services for students with disabilities. The manual addresses diverse, but related areas (e.g., inclusion, transition, curriculum, collaboration) that need to be included in a comprehensive view of programs for students with disabilities. An assumption guiding the development of this manual is that administrators, teachers, other service providers, students and their families, and the community must collaborate to provide quality services for students with disabilities.

This 15 chapter manual has three major sections. The first section, "Leadership and Collaboration" provides a broad view of program leadership. A conceptual framework for program leadership in special education is presented in chapter one. This framework is based on our interpretation of the research literature and the feedback of leaders in special education across the country. The importance of each of the tasks in the conceptual framework was verified by a statewide study of teachers and administrators in Virginia. Subsequent chapters provide more detailed guidance on each aspect of the framework. The remainder of the three chapters in the first section provide guidance for leaders as they develop a vision for special education programs (chapter 2) and suggest strategies for collaborating with other agencies (chapter 3) and families (chapter 4) to achieve positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

The second section of the manual, "Program Development and Evaluation" provides technical assistance in seven specific areas fundamental to creating strong instruction and services. These include Individual Educational Plans (chapter 5), Curriculum Adaptation and Development (chapter 6), Effective Instruction (chapter 7), Including and Supporting Students with Disabilities within General Education (chapter 8), Positive Behavior Management (chapter 9), Secondary Education Transition Programs (chapter 10), and Program Evaluation (chapter 11).

Section three of this manual, "Professional Development and Support" contains four chapters designed to help leaders in special education create supportive working environments for teachers and service-providers as well as facilitate professional growth among staff members. These four chapters include information on staff development (chapter 12), teacher support (chapter 13), teacher collaboration (chapter 14), and teacher and personnel evaluation (chapter 15).

Because the manual is intended to serve as a reference tool, chapters need not be read in any order. The chapters are organized in a similar format to facilitate understanding. Questions at the beginning of each chapter organize the given chapter. The end of each chapter contains reference information for further reading and in most cases supplementary material.

## *Acknowledgments*

Many individuals collaborated on this manual. A special thank you is due to the authors, all of whom provided useful and up-to-date chapters. Special education administrators, university professors, and state department officials provided thoughtful reviews. Beverly Cline also helped during the early stages of this project while on staff at Virginia Tech. Many thanks to Barbara Flanagan (Roanoke County Schools) and Cynthia Warger (Warger, Eavy, and Associates) for reviewing the document and to Virginia Laycock McLaughlin (William and Mary) and Judy Smith-Davis (DISSEM/ACTION, Inc.) for their ideas and assistance.

I especially acknowledge the staff and doctoral students from the Special Education Administration and Supervision Program at Virginia Tech for their contributions to this project. Deana Peterson deserves special recognition for keeping this project organized, and assuring that everyone was on task, and that bills were paid. Dee Bodkins and Mary Beth Hendricks provided valuable assistance by sharing the editing task with me. I am especially appreciative of the efforts of Darlene Johnson and Kathy Tickle, who typed sections of this manual, formatted the document, and handled correspondence with the authors and reviewers. They cheerfully and efficiently made numerous rounds of revisions in preparing the final draft. Thanks also to Jelisa Coltrane, Karen Gerry-Corpening, Linda Petrie, and Debbie Williams for helping with the final proofing of this document.

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***Bonnie Billingsley***
***Virginia Tech***

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# *Introduction*

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# *Leadership and Collaboration*

## Chapter 1

# A Conceptual Framework for Program Leadership in the Education of Students with Disabilities

*Bonnie S. Billingsley, Michele Farley,*
*and Harvey A. Rude*

## INTRODUCTION

Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), (formerly Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), provides for a free, appropriate public education for all children with disabilities in the "least restrictive environment." For the past two decades this law and its amendments, together with numerous related court decisions, have had a tremendous impact on millions of previously unserved or poorly served children. During this time, special education initiatives have primarily been directed toward the development and implementation of policy and compliance procedures aimed at ensuring access to educational programs for students with disabilities.

While these efforts have been largely successful in creating access to special education services, many educators now question the overall effectiveness of the programs. Administrative compliance with laws and regulations does not in itself guarantee high-quality programs and instruction. As Gerber (1984) forewarned, "we cannot equate progress in implementing policy with progress in promoting educational quality" (p. 209). The focus of advocacy in the 1990s is shifting from demand for provision of services to the *quality* of services for students with disabilities (Algozzine, Maheady, Sacca, O'Shea, & O'Shea, 1990; Davis, 1990; Gerber, 1988; Loucks-Horsley & Roody, 1990).

A critical function of leadership is to improve educational programs and improve student learning (Bevoise, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1984). This chapter provides a conceptual framework for improving instruction and services to students with disabilities. Subsequent chapters in this manual specifically address each aspect of this framework. Two questions are addressed in this chapter:

1. **Who is responsible for leadership in special education?**

2. **What are the critical leadership tasks necessary for providing services to students with disabilities?**

## 1. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADERSHIP IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Traditionally, many principals have regarded leadership in special education as a central office responsibility, despite the building-level delivery of instruction and services. This administrative separateness, as Will (1986) has argued, "contributes to a lack of program coordination, raises questions about leadership, clouds areas of responsibility, and obscures lines of accountability in schools" (p. 8). Others have taken similar positions, maintaining that a dual system hinders both school and program effectiveness because they "create artificial barriers between people and divide resources, personnel, and advocacy potential" (Stainback & Stainback, 1984, p. 105).

Over the past 10 years, tremendous advances have been made in the provision of appropriate educational opportunities to learners with special needs. The duties of school administrators charged with providing special education leadership have evolved with equal sophistication and complexity. The shifting focus on decentralization of special education, coupled with the current movement toward the inclusion of students with special needs, has placed greater emphasis on the principal's role in providing leadership in special education (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988; Rude & Rubadeau, 1992). Principals are assuming more responsibility for ensuring the effective instruction and services for students with disabilities.

The lessons of how to implement policy so that it makes a difference are being increasingly influenced by the tenets of school-based decision making (Raywid, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1985). School-based decision making is based on the premise that those who are closest to the schools should have both the responsibility and the authority to make decisions (Council for Administrators of Special Education, 1993). In the context of school-based decision making, leadership is exercised by everyone who has defined responsibility for students (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). Those who are closest to the students will have the best perspective on how to address their unique needs and/or concerns (Bonstingl, 1992). Therefore, principals, teachers, related service providers, parents, and paraprofessionals all have leadership roles in special education.

The idea that service providers are empowered to exercise leadership directed at improving the system is critical to the success of school-based decision making. Therefore, providing effective leadership in special education becomes a shared responsibility among all who are involved with the student and requires increased collaboration between regular and special educators (Lipp, 1992; Rude & Rubadeau, 1992; VanHorn, Burrello, & DeClue, 1992). Principals are relying more heavily on special education administrators as vital sources of information and support to meet their increasing responsibilities as special education instructional leaders. In turn, special education administrators are realizing the importance of their role as facilitator to principals (Brown, 1981). This places a high value on leadership, in comparison to management. The critical elements of successful leadership include the ability of leaders to establish direction, align people, motivate and inspire others, and produce useful changes in the organization.

## 2. WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL LEADERSHIP TASKS NECESSARY FOR PROVIDING SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

A conceptual framework of critical leadership tasks necessary for building high-quality instruction and services to students with disabilities is presented in this section (also see Appendix) and is based on a comprehensive review of the professional literature. An overview of each task included in the framework is presented in this section. The remainder of this manual provides more detailed discussions of the necessary knowledge, understandings, and leadership skills that contribute to successful performance of these tasks.

### Develops and Communicates a Shared Vision for Educating Students with Disabilities

Leaders must communicate to teachers and all other staff that the education of students with disabilities is *everyone's* responsibility. Leaders can coordinate this effort by involving stakeholders in developing a clear vision for educating students with disabilities. Sharing responsibility necessitates teamwork among all who are involved with students.

Clarifying a shared vision also involves the development of program descriptions. Such descriptions should cover philosophy and goals, student outcomes, curriculum options, and instructional guidelines. These descriptions can then be used to communicate different aspects of the program to various audiences (Billingsley, 1988). Explicitly stated goals help sustain commitment and morale in organizations (Fullan, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989) and provide assistance to those responsible for implementing the instruction and services to students with disabilities.

Teacher and staff roles should also be clearly described. Team efforts are further enhanced when the various roles of resource personnel who provide support to teachers in the form of related or auxiliary services are clearly communicated (Algozzine, Maheady, Sacca, O'Shea, & O'Shea, 1990; Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Loucks-Horsley & Roody, 1990; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Will, 1986). The focus on collaboration among the various actors who play a role in the development of high-quality special education instruction and services is of primary importance. The concept of shared vision must encompass the dreams of professional educators from both generalist and specialist roles, administrators, parents, and students.

### Provides Opportunities for Family, Community, and Other Agency Involvement in Special Education

Parent and family involvement is vital to maintaining effective programs for students with disabilities. The participation of parents in their child's educational program is beneficial to the parents, professionals, and child (Gerber, Banbury, Miller, & Griffin, 1986; Lowry, Patton, & Braithwaite, 1983). The concept of partnership between home and school is essential to fostering the most successful level of involvement between families and educators. This is a natural extension of the tremendous advocacy role that parents and parent groups have always played in the evolution of special education. Parent and family participation need to be encouraged by school leaders.

Leaders need to promote collaboration between school programs and community and other agencies. Facilitating the coordination of school programs and interagency groups is necessary for ensuring that students with disabilities receive appropriate assistance. Effective leaders incorporate the input from community and other agencies into the vision of education.

### Facilitates Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development and Implementation

Administrators need to encourage all IEP participants to be actively involved in IEP planning. Parents and students need to be encouraged to share their perspectives and share in decision making. Teachers often need assistance in IEP development that extends beyond compliance. Assistance is especially important to beginning teachers, who often struggle with IEP issues (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992). Teachers sometimes need assistance in selecting appropriate instructional goals, developing appropriate measures to assess student performance, and involving parents in IEP meetings.

### Provides Assistance with Curriculum and Instructional Programs

Curriculum and instructional programming are critical to effective instruction, yet the responsibility for leadership in these areas varies widely. Many special education teachers report that curriculum and instructional programming are provided by central office administrators. Others report that their building principal (or assistant principal) provides the assistance necessary for the day-to-day implementation of programs for students with disabilities. The effective schools literature reports that, because of administrative responsibilities, principals spend relatively little time on curriculum and instruction (Martin & Willower, 1981; Tetenbaum, Mulkeen, & Hale, 1987). At the same time, however, a major research effort by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is focusing on increasing the teaching/learning efficiency of students with disabilities in mainstream settings by designing a participatory change model "with the principal as the primary agent of change" (Kaufman, Kameenui, Berman, & Danielson, 1990, p. 112).

There are several things that supervisors and principals can do to assist teachers with the delivery of instruction. First, it is critical to provide a curriculum framework to guide teachers' instructional decisions. This framework should go beyond traditional academic subjects to include behavioral, social, transitional, and vocational interventions. Unfortunately, some special education teachers do not have established curricula to guide their decisions and this can lead to haphazard decision making. Bigge (1988) has emphasized the need for curriculum alternatives in special education and a curriculum framework that ranges from regular to modified curricula.

Second, leaders need to help identify and obtain resources, materials, and technology that teachers can use to implement curricula. Best practices indicate that teachers who have access to a variety of resources and materials are more likely to modify instruction to meet the individual needs of all students (Bickel & Bickel, 1986; CASE, 1988). Administrators can also help organize and arrange space and materials that teachers need for instruction or for modifying instruction (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988; CASE, 1988; Pugach & Johnson, 1988). Finally, leaders provide instructional support by assisting teachers with the development of lesson plans that reflect curricular goals and objectives stated in the IEP (Smith, 1990; Zigmond & Baker, 1990) and helping them evaluate instruction. The use of various innovations and strategies to improve instruction should be both encouraged and rewarded.

### Ensures Appropriate Inclusion Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Shared responsibility for educating students with disabilities requires school-wide collaboration among the supervisor, principal, general and special education teachers, and support staff (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988; Davis, 1989; Hagerty & Abramson, 1987; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Will, 1986). Leaders need to provide ongoing support and assistance with inclusion efforts. A student with special needs very often receives instruction and services from more than one individual. Each part of the student's educational program must be carefully coordinated to form a cohesive whole. Classroom teachers who may provide most of a student's instructional program need to be part of the IEP meeting. In addition to helping plan instructional programs, teachers who share in a student's instruction need opportunities to observe that student when he or she is with other teachers (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988; Morrison, Lieber, & Morrison, 1986; Skrtic, 1987).

Administrators also need to assist teachers with developing and implementing classroom interventions that can reduce the number of referrals for special education. This may be accomplished by providing a support system for general and special education teachers, such as building-based support teams, school-based assistance teams, or mainstream assistance teams (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bahr, 1990; Graden, 1989;

Pugach & Johnson, 1989; Reisberg & Wolf, 1986; Wesson, 1991). Members of these teams also assist each other by collaborating on classroom interventions for students who have already been identified as disabled. This strategy provides collective input into the design of classroom interventions and also reinforces the spirit of teamwork at the school.

### Designs Positive Behavior Management Programs

Maintaining a school environment that is conducive to student growth and learning is a major concern of administrators, teachers, and other support personnel. The correlations between administrative leadership and schools with high degrees of order and discipline are noteworthy. Studies exploring the attributes of effective schools have consistently identified the need for order and discipline as key components. Other social organization factors found in effective schools include high expectations, clearly specified academic and behavior goals, teacher efficacy and confidence, and administrative leadership (Medley & Coker, 1987; Medley, Coker, & Soar, 1984).

### Implements Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

Implementing transition services for students with disabilities needs to occur at different levels (e.g., from pre-school to elementary, from elementary to middle school, from secondary school to work settings). Transition services for secondary students with disabilities is also required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Leaders facilitate collaboration among various transition service providers within the school and outside agencies. A key component is incorporating a transition component into the student's IEP. When planning and delivering transition services, leaders need to make sure that the services are provided within an outcome-oriented process and that the student with special needs is involved throughout the transition planning process. In doing so, the administrator can be assured that the student receives transition services that meet his or her individual needs and interests. This area has become more critical with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which provides a variety of guarantees for employees with disabilities in the workplace. Administrators and staff can serve as an effective bridge between academic and vocational environments for individuals with disabilities.

### Monitors and Evaluates Student Progress and Effectiveness of Special Education Programs

Teachers should use curriculum-based assessment to assess students' progress toward IEP and curricular goals. This is more useful than the standardized tests many teachers are accustomed to using (CASE, 1988; Smith, 1990; Wesson, 1991). In the area of direct instruction to students, leaders need to encourage teachers to provide feedback and praise to students with special needs, since these students often have low self-esteem and an expectancy of failure (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Will, 1986). Finally, stakeholders need to evaluate the effectiveness of programs they are providing for students with disabilities. Time should be set aside to periodically evaluate whether the goals and expectations for these programs are being realized and, if not, determine where changes must take place.

### Ensures Appropriate Staff Development Activities

Leadership is also needed to provide ongoing staff development activities. Teachers and staff members should be given an active role in planning their own staff development activities. Many suggest that teachers who are given opportunities to plan, apply, and reflect upon new information or skills presented in inservice programs are more likely to change ineffective teaching behaviors (Barth, 1986; Glatthorn, 1990; Jones, 1986; Joyce, 1990; Korinek & McAdams, 1985; Villa, 1989). Because of rapid changes taking place in the field of special education (e.g., the Regular Education Initiative [REI], use of technology), administrators should encourage teacher involvement in activities for professional growth and provide incentives for doing so (Glatthorn, 1990; Villa, 1989). This is especially important for new teachers who may have little or no training in working with students with special needs.

### Supports Staff Members and Involves Them in Decision Making

A major responsibility of administrators is supporting staff members (Schetz & Billingsley, 1992). This support enhances teacher commitment (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988) and reduces burnout and attrition (Dworkin, 1987). Although many of the tasks included in this framework are important dimensions of teacher support, emotional support is critical as well. Emotional support includes acknowledging teachers' efforts, communicating confidence and respect for teachers, and generally being available to problem solve and discuss teacher concerns and needs.

Another important dimension of support is giving teachers a voice in the decisions that affect them (Barth, 1986; Davis, 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989; Ruck, 1986). Shared decision making in program planning, implementation, and evaluation provides teachers with a sense of ownership of programs in which they are involved (Bickel & Bickel, 1986; Davis, 1989; Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Will, 1986).

### Encourages Collaboration Among School Staff

There are a certain number of students who do not have disabilities, but have special needs that must be accommodated in the general education classroom. There are also students with disabilities for whom the general education classroom is their full-time placement. The learning problems experienced by these students can be especially frustrating to classroom teachers, who often lack expertise in developing alternative instructional strategies. Administrators need to work with teachers to provide opportunities for them to learn, solve problems, and interact in small groups or teams (Huefner, 1988; Idol & West, 1987; Johnson, Pugach, & Hammitte, 1988; Little, 1982; Phillips & McCullough, 1990). Teachers should also be provided with opportunities to observe each other's teaching methods and strategies.

### Evaluates Staff Using Systematic Procedures

Ongoing staff development also requires follow-up supervision to assist teachers in the application and refinement of instructional strategies. Administrators and teachers need to schedule frequent observations for the purpose of improving effectiveness (formative evaluation) rather than for making judgments (Azumi & Madhere, 1983; Billingsley, 1988; Glickman, 1990; Natriello, 1984). Research indicates that teachers want to be observed more often than they are so that principals understand what it is they do and where problems lie (Glickman, 1990). Using sound evaluation practices, the administrator schedules conferences following observations to analyze and discuss instructional effectiveness. These procedures allow the evaluator and teacher to develop mutually defined, nonthreatening evaluation criteria (Billingsley, 1988; Warger & Aldinger, 1987).

## SUMMARY

Strong leadership is vital to ensuring effective instruction and services for students with special needs. While administrators must clearly be involved in building and improving services to students with disabilities, all who are involved with special education students need to share in this responsibility. This requires a focus on leadership, rather than management. Leaders help establish direction, align people, and motivate and inspire others. A framework for leadership tasks is provided in this first chapter, and the remainder of the manual provides additional information on how to accomplish these important tasks.

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# APPENDIX

## A Conceptual Framework for Program Leadership in the Education of Students with Disabilities

# A Conceptual Framework for Program Leadership in the Education of Students With Disabilities

**Develops and Communicates a Shared Vision for Educating Students with Disabilities**

- Communicates to teachers and all staff that the education of students with disabilities is a shared responsibility.

- Provides clear direction and active support to teachers and staff regarding the philosophy, goals, and expectations for providing instruction and services to students with disabilities.

**Provides Opportunities for Family, Community, and Other Agency Involvement in Special Education**

- Provides opportunities for meaningful parent and family involvement in the education of students with disabilities.

- Facilitates the coordination of programs and services between school staff and community and interagency groups.

**Facilitates Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development and Implementation**

- Encourages all who are involved with the student to actively participate in the IEP process.

- Provides assistance in IEP development, implementation, and evaluation.

**Provides Assistance with Curriculum and Instructional Programs**

- Assists with curriculum development and/or modification.

- Assists with identifying appropriate instructional strategies and resources.

- Helps organize and arrange space/materials for modifying instruction.

- Helps translate individual student objectives into daily lesson plans.

- Encourages the use of various innovations to improve instruction, including technology.

**Ensures Appropriate Inclusion Opportunities for Students with Disabilities**

- Provides ongoing support for and assistance with inclusion efforts.
- Encourages students with disabilities to participate in all school activities.
- Assists with developing and implementing classroom interventions to help at-risk students.

**Develops Positive Behavior Management Programs**

- Assesses the existing behavior management system and makes changes based on student needs and current educational programs.
- Fosters the development of positive, responsible student behavior.
- Guides school personnel in implementing behavior management strategies to produce more supportive, instructional, and preventative behavior management programs.

**Ensures Transition Services for Students with Disabilities**

- Plans and implements transition services for students (e.g., from pre-school to elementary, from elementary to middle school, from secondary schools to world of work, post-secondary education)
- Plans and delivers goals, objectives, instruction, and related services within an outcome-oriented process.
- Involves students in transition planning.
- Promotes collaboration among transition service providers within the school and with outside agencies.
- Assists in developing strategies for including a transition component into the student's IEP (individualized education program).
- Ensures that students with disabilities receive high-quality transition planning and transition services that meet their individual needs and interests.

**Monitors and Evaluates Student Progress and Effectiveness of Special Education Programs**

- Helps teachers interpret and use assessment data that measure progress toward curricular goals and objectives (curriculum-based assessment).

- Provides frequent monitoring of students' progress.
- Involves teachers in evaluating the effectiveness of special programs.
- Uses evaluation results to make informed program decisions.

**Ensures Appropriate Staff Development Activities**

- Provides opportunities for collaborative planning of staff development activities.
- Evaluates the usefulness of information or skills presented in staff development sessions.
- Provides opportunities to apply, practice, and reflect on skills presented in staff development sessions.
- Encourages teacher involvement in activities for professional growth.
- Provides incentives to encourage personal and professional growth.
- Provides ongoing support and assistance to beginning teachers.

**Supports Staff Members and Involves Them in Decision Making**

- Acknowledges teachers' and other staff members' efforts.
- Communicates confidence and respect for teachers and all other staff.
- Encourages shared decision making in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs for students with disabilities.

**Encourages Collaboration Among School Staff**

- Provides opportunities for regular and special teachers to observe students taught by each other.
- Provides opportunities for teachers and related services personnel to learn, solve problems, and interact in small groups or teams.
- Evaluates and modifies school-based consultation programs.

**Evaluates Staff Using Systematic Procedures**

- Schedules frequent observations for improving instructional effectiveness.

- Schedules conferences following observations to analyze and discuss instruction.

- Evaluates teachers using clearly defined criteria.

## Chapter 2

# Program Vision and Descriptions

*Michael George and Nancy George*

## INTRODUCTION

Leaders in special education need to communicate the notion that educating students with disabilities is a shared responsibility, requiring the cooperation of numerous stakeholders in the education process. Given the complexity of administering education and related services in a climate of shrinking resources, the challenge for the 1990s is to develop services that are at once efficient in the utilization of finite resources and effective in achieving their goals. For many special education administrators, the first step to meeting this challenge is to clarify a vision for their programs, help staff better understand the rationale and goals of their services, develop procedural guidelines for capturing their vision and accomplishing their goals, and stipulate the anticipated outcomes for the beneficiaries of their services.

It should be recognized that special education programs do not and cannot operate in a vacuum. Instead, they operate in conjunction with other parts of the total child service system within the community. Just as a special education program is dependent on the community for local success, so, too, a healthy community is dependent on the services provided by the special education program. Sharing information about the special education program with general educators, parents, and other community members fosters understanding and support for services.

Defining the operational characteristics of special education programs is not only essential to good planning but also likely to have tangible benefits in terms of program functioning. For example, programs that have written plans for exiting students from special services tend to have higher rates of students exiting successfully than those with no written plans (George & George, 1992). On the other hand, Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) concluded that when attempts to develop models for consultation and collaboration between special and general educators have failed, it was largely due to lack of specificity and detail in planning.

Most, if not all, special education programs already have some type of written program information available. However, it usually takes the form of regulations that operationalize federal and state law. Compliance plans are examples of this type of program information. Although compliance plans represent an important and necessary component of a district's written program information, they provide only the "legal targets" that districts must reach to ensure that students receive the full benefits implied in the notion of a "free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment." Missing in over half of the special education programs nationwide are specific descriptions of program service (Grosenick, George, & George, 1988); and according to Kauffman, Beirne-Smith, Eichberg, Hester, McCullough, and Williams (1985), the lack of program descriptions is clearly an impediment to the development of high-quality services for special education populations.

This chapter outlines a process to help administrators develop written program descriptions of special education service delivery and communicate these descriptions to a wide audience of relevant stakeholders. After reading this chapter, school administrators should have a clearer understanding of how program descriptions can benefit a school program and a process for writing comprehensive program descriptions. The chapter is organized around the following questions:

1. **What are program descriptions?**
2. **What are the benefits of program descriptions?**
3. **What elements are included in a program description?**
4. **How can school district personnel develop program descriptions?**
5. **To whom should program descriptions be communicated?**

## 1. WHAT ARE PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS?

Program descriptions are the policies, procedures, and other written guidelines that provide vehicles for communicating the types of services made available through a special education program. Program descriptions spell out a program's obligations to the students who are served and the conditions under which those obligations will be fulfilled. By describing in some detail what the special education program "should be," program descriptions help shape stakeholders' expectations of the program and provide staff with a basis for decision making and evaluation.

## 2. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS?

Program descriptions, in the form of policies, procedures, guidelines, and other printed materials such as brochures and handbooks, have certain inherent advantages for special education programs. Some of the potential benefits of program descriptions include the following:

- Help school staff, parents, school board members, and other interested persons to know what the special education program should be.

- Provide a sense of direction for program participants and serve to keep staff informed about their obligations to the child (Grosenick, George, & George, 1988).
- Incorporate clearly stated goals and strategies for achieving them, and help in sustaining staff commitment and morale (Cherniss, 1980; Fullan, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989).
- Promote a sense of unity and stimulate action on the part of program participants (Grosenick, George, & George, 1990).
- Contribute to overall consistency in special education service delivery, thereby fostering a sense of fairness and equity in decision making (Grosenick, George, & George, 1988).
- Provide the basis for program evaluation and improvement (Billingsley, 1988; Maher & Bennett, 1984; Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978).
- Facilitate the replication of effective programs (Grosenick, George, & George, 1988).
- Facilitate improvement in program design and operation (Kauffman, Beirne-Smith, Eichberg, Hester, McCullough, and Williams, 1985) and set the occasion for organizing systematic program evaluation efforts (Grosenick, George, & George, 1988).
- Help communicate important information to community agencies, and play a key role in forming interagency agreements (Otterbourg, 1986).

## 3. WHAT ELEMENTS ARE INCLUDED IN A PROGRAM DESCRIPTION?

Special education programs among the over 16,000 school districts in the United States differ in terms of their size, urbanicity, relative wealth, organizational structure, and service delivery configurations. Nevertheless, they are guided by the same federal legislation and to a large degree by the same pedagogy. Therefore, certain fundamental commonalities can be identified both across programs and across the 12 disability areas listed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As part of our past research, we sought to identify the essential components of a well-designed special education program in an attempt to develop a framework around which programs could be described and evaluated (Grosenick, George, & George, 1987; 1988; 1990). The model was developed by a panel of special education administrators and personnel from state departments of education and higher education. The model consists of eight components considered fundamental to a program charged with providing special education services. Using the results of a national survey, 10 special education administrators from the best-designed districts in the sample validated the model in a 2-day working conference in Eugene, Oregon (Grosenick, George, & George, 1990).

Results showed that a comprehensive program description of special education programs addresses the following eight fundamental components:

- Philosophy.
- Goals.
- Student needs and identification.
- Instructional methods and curriculum.
- Program operation and design.
- Community involvement.
- Exit.
- Evaluation.

These eight components provide a way for analyzing and evaluating programs as well as describing them, and they are applicable to any disability area, service option, and even to a district's entire array of services. The components should be viewed as an integrated whole, each standing in a dynamic relationship with the others. Using this framework to describe programs allows administrators to

- Develop a rationale and vision for their program.
- Establish goals and mission statements to guide the efforts of staff.
- Identify which students are eligible and how they enter the program.
- Identify the type of curriculum and methods that will be used to teach students once they enter the program.
- Determine how physical, human, and fiscal resources will be allocated.
- Identify the conditions under which students leave the program.
- Identify what community agencies will be involved with the program.
- Evaluate program outcomes and make decisions for improving the program.

## 4. HOW CAN SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL DEVELOP PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS?

### *Step 1: Gather Preliminary Information*

As with any new endeavor, careful planning is required before developing a new program. The goal of fully describing the services and functions of a special education program is an ambitious task, likely to take considerable time to complete. Success will depend to a large extent on the skills of the administrators involved -- their commitment to the process of writing program descriptions and the guidance they provide to others.

The first step in the process of writing program descriptions is information gathering. School officials should gather together many of the materials that may be on hand to provide useful background information to those who will be involved in the writing process. These materials may include the following:

- A copy of federal, state, and local guidelines that may influence the program's policies and procedures (e.g., definition of special populations, eligibility criteria, etc.).
- A copy of the program's mission statement, or overall program goals.
- Curricular guidelines, or state guidelines on curriculum adoption, and possibly samples of materials typically used in the program.
- A statement of school district policy and philosophy about involvement with the community.
- State and local guidelines or joint agreements with community agencies.
- Professional literature regarding effective teaching methods with special populations.
- Procedures for student exit from special education.
- Job descriptions that spell out roles and responsibilities of program staff.
- Descriptions of the types and levels of services provided in the special education program.
- A copy of the evaluation plan or results of previous program evaluations.

*Step 2: Convene a Committee*

A committee should take on the task of writing the program descriptions. Committee members should include individuals who have expertise and an interest in the special education program, as well as the time to invest. Involving persons with diverse roles (e.g., administrators, teachers, support personnel, etc.) will not only improve the quality of the information collected, but also promote understanding and acceptance among school staff for the decisions reached. Some of the participants should also be aware of the current literature regarding best practices and current trends in special education.

*Step 3: Designate a Coordinator*

One individual should be assigned to coordinate the process. Usually program administrators serve in this role. A successful coordinator fulfills the following tasks:

- Organizes the collection of background information.
- Clarifies the goals for the group.
- Sets the agenda for each committee meeting and establishes timelines for accomplishing tasks.
- Encourages full participation by all members.
- Keeps individuals on task.
- Summarizes and clarifies key points.
- Revises the final product.

*Step 4: Develop Program Description*

This section provides specific information to assist committee members in the development of program descriptions. Each of the eight major components included in the program description is defined, followed by points to consider that further elaborate on a particular component. Finally, strategies for developing descriptions are presented for each component. A Program Description Worksheet is included in Appendix A. When completed, this provides the framework for communicating information about the program. Appendix B provides an example of a written program description for a teacher consultation program that provides services to students with serious behavior problems in Lane County, Oregon.

*Educational Philosophy*. An educational philosophy is an operational statement of the fundamental values and beliefs that justify the unique character of the educational services provided by the special education program. Elements of a philosophy deal with such concepts as society, schooling, and the child and include beliefs about the nature of disabilities (etiology, traits, and prognosis) and assumptions about how best to intervene and assist. The statement of philosophy should differentiate one educational program from another and should influence the characteristics of all other program components.

**Points to Consider**

- According to Selznick (1957), "The formation of an institution is marked by the making of value commitments; that is, the choices which fix the assumptions of policy makers as to the nature of the enterprise, its distinctive aims, methods and roles."
- The philosophy provides a rationale for why a program exists and supplies a sense of unity that pervades every aspect of the program's functioning.
- The program philosophy connects all the elements and activities of the program to the goals and values that provide direction and meaning for people's work.
- A philosophy that serves a program well is one that drives and inspires those involved with the program.

**Strategies for Development**

1. Survey program participants either through interviews or questionnaires to ascertain their beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about the purpose and rationale of the program. Some sample questions include the following:
    - What motivates you to work with students who have disabilities?
    - What factors or conditions contribute to making your students educationally unique?
    - Why is your role with students important, and what can you do to assist them?
    - What educational principles guide your professional growth?
2. Develop a philosophical platform. Generate a list of tenets that represents the philosophy of the program. To help organize this task,

you may want to write each statement in the form of a short declarative sentence, beginning with the words "we believe" or "we declare." Consider the following examples:

- We believe that all children can benefit from an education.
- We believe that all children have a right to an education in the least restrictive environment.
- We believe that all families should participate in the process of education.
- We believe that all teachers should be facilitators of learning.

3. Determine which statements are basic to the purpose of the program. One way to do this is to ask, "Which of the stated assumptions are essential for explaining the purpose and rationale of the program?" Decide whether any of the assumptions are in some way negotiable. If not, then you most likely have identified the fundamental suppositions on which your program is founded.

*Program Goals*. Program goals, like student goals, communicate purpose and direction. Goals for the program should be an outgrowth of the program philosophy and filter out what program participants desire to accomplish or feel they are realistically capable of accomplishing given the present level of resources available. Establishing program goals helps identify the common missions for program staff and provides program planners and evaluators with standards against which to measure how well a program is meeting its intended aims.

**Points to Consider**

- The pursuit of a goal is in itself reinforcing for the individual (Chapin, 1957).
- Program goals are broad in nature.
- Program goals serve as a reference point for program evaluation.
- Program goals serve to direct and explain professional behavior as it influences students in the setting.

**Strategies for Development**

1. Solicit input from staff and other invested stakeholders as to the major aims of the program.

2. Group the goals according to broad categories (e.g., behavioral, academic, vocational, etc.). This strategy will help organize the specific aims of the program into broader goal statements.

3. Refine the goals so that they clearly reflect the intent and purposes of the program.

*Student Needs and Identification*. Student needs and identification refers to the characteristics of children and youth with disabilities and the development of processes and procedures for entering them into the special education program. The delivery of special education services is predicated on making a determination that a child has an educational disability and can benefit from the services provided. The same holds true for the provision of any particular type of service such as consultation, resource, self-contained classroom, and so forth. Educators for all types of specialized services and service options should have a definition of who is eligible and who will be served.

**Points to Consider**

- Eligibility criteria that operationalize a definition of who should be served allow for further elaboration on the characteristics and needs of students and serve to differentiate the students who are eligible from those who are ineligible.

- Written procedures for referral and assessment provide appropriate direction to teachers, administrators, counselors, and others in the school setting as they strive to better understand the program and identify students who may potentially benefit from services.

**Strategies for Development**

1. Review state, federal, and local district definitions and guidelines for identification procedures.

2. Stipulate in writing the essential characteristics of the population receiving specialized services.

3. Delineate the types of prior interventions to be used before a student enters a particular program.

4. Specify who is involved in the decision to place a student into the program.

5. Specify the types of information needed for documenting eligibility and placement.

6. Decide how challenges to eligibility and placement will be handled.

*Instructional Methods and Curriculum*. Instructional methods and curriculum refer to the development of curricular guidelines that outline the daily instructional practices -- subject matter and intervention strategies -- for meeting students' needs. It is important that the instructional methods and curriculum are consistent with the program philosophy and goals and that they reflect educational practices substantiated by research as effective for addressing students' needs.

**Points to Consider**

- Educational outcomes will be determined by the curriculum that is taught and how well it is taught.
- The program's curriculum should be consonant with its philosophy and goals.
- A program's instructional methods should be grounded in best practices and substantiated by research.
- Effective instructional methods include careful goal setting, step-by-step instruction, guided practice, and specific feedback to students (Rieth & Evertson, 1988).

**Strategies for Development**

1. Describe the major curriculum areas addressed by the program (e.g., academic, social, vocational, behavioral, self-help, etc.).
2. Describe any specialized materials or equipment.
3. Describe any unique instructional methods or behavioral interventions routinely used in the program.
4. Write a set of curricular guidelines that spell out the parameters of the program's curriculum and instructional methods, addressing the following areas:
    - The scope of the general subject matter.
    - A suggested sequence for teachers to follow.
    - Instructional objectives organized by curriculum area.
    - Recommended behavioral interventions and instructional methods.

*Community Involvement*. Community involvement refers to the types of relationships and interactions a program fosters with people external to the school environment including parents, community groups and child care agencies, and businesses. There are numerous reasons for extending the educational program beyond the traditional confines of the classroom and school building; not least among these is the creation of additional resources and opportunities for students.

**Points to Consider**

- Involving diverse groups of people in the special education program increases the community's understanding, acceptance, and support of programs for students with disabilities.
- Effective community involvement aims to engage interested people as allies of the special education program.
- A well-designed plan for community involvement focuses on increasing understanding and collaboration among community groups.
- A community involvement plan should focus on two variables:

  (1) The identification of persons and community groups with whom involvement would be beneficial.
  (2) The types of involvement desired (i.e., awareness, communication, or collaboration).

**Strategies for Development**

1. Pinpoint the community groups or agencies with whom involvement and collaboration are desirable (e.g., parents, child care agencies, businesses, etc.).

2. Develop strategies for increasing *awareness* between the special education program and the targeted groups. Examples of awareness activities are as follows:

   - Newsletters about special education services.
   - Presentations about special education services.
   - Art fairs or open houses that display students' work and program facilities.
   - Newspaper articles, and public radio presentations.

3. Develop strategies for increasing *involvement* between the special education program and the targeted groups. Activities for involvement may include the following:

   - IEP meetings and home visits with parents.
   - A speaker's bureau with local businesses.
   - A community services resource handbook.
   - Inservice presentations on services.

4. Develop strategies for increasing *collaboration* between the special education program and the targeted groups. Examples of collaboration include the following:

   - Use of parent volunteers in the program.
   - Participation in a parent advocacy group.
   - Development of job training sites.
   - Development of cross-agency case management.

5. Write a short description of your plans for involving external agencies in the special education program.

*Program Design and Operation*. Program design and operation entail the development of an optimal program structure and management system that takes into consideration the types and levels of resources that are available to the program. The program design deals with such issues as site selection, levels of schooling, the configuration of service options, and the movement of students among them. Program operations refer to policies and procedures that may influence the quality of services, such as a personnel plan (the roles and responsibilities of personnel); a staff development plan (how professional growth will be encouraged and fostered); and a support plan (a plan for how fiscal, human, and physical resources are to be expended).

**Points to Consider**

- A program's design is bounded by its human, physical, and fiscal resources.
- A program's design should allow for students' movement between more restrictive and less restrictive services.

- A program operates efficiently when there are plans outlining the roles and responsibilities of staff.

**Strategies for Development**

1. Thoroughly describe the types of services offered by the program. Include in the description the following considerations:
    - Levels of service (i.e., preschool, elementary, middle school, high school, young adult).
    - Service delivery options (i.e., consultative, resource, self-contained, separate school, homebound).
    - Related services (e.g., occupational therapy, psychological services, transportation).
2. Identify the key participants in the program and describe their roles in delivering services. For example, delineate responsibilities of teachers, support staff, and other members of the multidisciplinary team including administrators and general education staff.
3. Explain how the various service delivery options interact with one another. For example, define the procedures for moving students from one level of service to another (e.g., resource room to self-contained classroom).
4. Describe resources available to the program (e.g., fiscal, physical facilities, specialized equipment or supplies, support staff, etc.) and how they influence the program.

*Exit*. Exit refers to the policies and procedures used to determine at what point students no longer require special education services or at what point services will no longer be provided. Development of exit procedures addresses three important issues: (1) specification of criteria for determining students' readiness to leave the program; (2) a clear designation of the procedural steps that comprise the exit process; and (3) identification of who will be involved in the exit process -- that is, who will participate in the collection of data, prepare the receiving environment, coordinate a well-prepared transition process, and monitor follow-up.

**Points to Consider**

- The existence of exit procedures leads to the expectation that students can and will leave the special education program.

- Exit procedures should be stated in such a way as to ensure consistency of application across students.

- Exit criteria should be included as part of a student's initial IEP to provide a target, or standard, that the student needs to achieve before terminating special education services.

- Communication of exit criteria and procedures mitigates the likelihood that students will be perceived as "locked in" to special education.

**Strategies for Development**

1. Write a set of exit procedures that clearly identifies the steps in the process for reintegrating students who no longer need special education services. Areas you may want to address include the following:

    - Who is responsible for making the exit decision.

    - The standards, or criteria, by which a student is judged ready to exit special education.

    - How student readiness is to be assessed and documented.

    - The length of time allowed for transition into general education.

    - Roles and responsibilities of special educators in preparing the receiving teacher and other school personnel for the student's return.

    - Who is responsible for follow-up and/or support in general education.

2. Communicate the exit procedures to a broad group of people in the program to obtain their reaction and feedback. Revise if necessary.

*Evaluation*. Evaluation refers to an ongoing process of data gathering and subsequent appraisal of the special education program to determine how well it meets its intended goals. A sound evaluation plan addresses activities at three levels: students, personnel, and the program. Elements of an evaluation plan include the purpose and objectives of the evaluation effort, the methods for conducting the evaluation, participants in the evaluation process, timelines, and a clear notion of how the evaluation results are to be used. Program evaluation is grounded in the premise that all programs can be improved, and it supplies program planners with information for making proactive decisions for improving services for students with disabilities.

## Points to Consider

- In an effort to demonstrate that students with disabilities are receiving appropriate services, special educators must examine their own programs in terms of their intended outcomes.

- Program evaluation is a systematic process of information gathering for the purpose of decision making.

- Staff evaluation refers to personnel associated with the program, including administrators, supervisors, teachers, teacher aides, assistants, and so forth. Staff evaluation typically involves assessment of work habits, attitudes, and the performance of professional responsibilities as stipulated in a job description. All forms of staff evaluation must incorporate provisions for ensuring due process.

- Student evaluation focuses on students' performance (outcomes) in various areas such as academics, behavior, and social-emotional development. Student assessments can be formal or informal in nature. Although special education programs collect large amounts of information about students, there is little evidence that the data are used to make decisions.

- Program evaluation refers to the assessment of the program as an organizational unit and may involve an appraisal of policies and procedures, as well as the program's plan and design. At this level of evaluation, the eight components listed in this chapter help structure program evaluation activities.

## Strategies for Development

1. Develop an evaluation plan that answers the following questions:

    - What is the focus of the evaluation?

    - Why is it important to evaluate?

    - How will the evaluation be conducted?

    - How often will evaluation occur?

    - How will the results be used?

2. Stipulate how the evaluation results will be used in the process of program improvement.

## 5. TO WHOM SHOULD PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS BE COMMUNICATED?

### *Step 1: Identify Persons Who Should Know About Your Program*

Program information should be communicated to a diverse group of people who have both professional and personal interactions with the special education program. Sharing program information with special education staff, general educators, parents, school board members, and other stakeholders increases awareness and understanding of the special education program. This, in turn, could generate acceptance of and support for special services within the community.

Other groups to target include community child care agencies (e.g., Division of Child and Family Services, Division of Mental Health), community groups (e.g., Association for Retarded Citizens, Crippled Children's Association), and local businesses who may provide fiscal support for the program. The rationale for targeting community groups is to foster community awareness, explore untapped resources, seek alliances with other agencies working with youth with disabilities, foster acceptance of individuals with disabilities, and ensure electoral support. Diminishing fiscal resources increase the value of cooperative relationships among special education programs and other public and private service providers.

### *Step 2: Develop Rationale for Communicating Program Information*

For each group of persons targeted for communication about the special education program, attempt to formulate a rationale for why their awareness and understanding of the program would be beneficial. For example, if the Board of Education is to make sound decisions regarding program expansion or reduction, it is important for members to be well informed about the operation of the special education program and the benefits it offers to students in the district. IDEA mandates that decisions regarding eligibility and placement into special education involve a multidisciplinary team (MDT) and specifies the rights of parents in the process. Members of this team must be knowledgeable about special education's goals and fundamental policies and procedures in order to make sound eligibility and placement decisions.

### *Step 3: Develop Appropriate Mechanisms for Communicating Program Information*

Communication mechanisms may be formal or informal. Both types will prove effective, depending on the target audience and the purpose for communication. Formal methods of communication include prepared presentations and written program materials in the form of policy guides, brochures, or program handbooks. If the purpose of communication is to disseminate new policy or spell out all the services offered in special education, a written format may be most suitable, because it can be easily retrieved. Informal communication can be used effectively in situations requiring person-to-person contacts. Opportunities to relate specific aspects of program information occur during IEP meetings, staffings, parent conferences, PTA meetings, conferences with community agencies, and so on.

The following are possible mechanisms for communicating information from the program description to appropriate persons:

- Program handbook or policy guide.
- Memoranda to professional staff.
- IEP meetings.
- Presentations to community agencies.
- Inservice presentations to general education staff.
- Program brochure.
- Staff meetings.
- PTA, open house.
- Parent meetings.

*Step 4: Devise a Communication Plan*

As a final activity, devise a plan for communicating the program's policies and procedures. First, consider the appropriate groups of people who should be aware of the program's services. List these groups of persons. Next, select the communication mechanisms you plan to use to share the program information. List the communication mechanisms you will use next to each group of targeted individuals.

## SUMMARY

Program descriptions provide a sense of direction for program participants and contribute to overall consistency in special education service delivery. They serve as the basis for communicating important program information to other educators, parents, and members of the community. This chapter presented a step-by-step process for writing comprehensive program descriptions based on a model consisting of eight essential program components.

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# APPENDIX A

## Program Description Worksheet

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET

Name of Program: ______________________________

What is the program's philosophy?

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

What are the program's goals?

______________________________________________________________________

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______________________________________________________________________

**What are the program's student identification procedures?**

**Definition of population served:** ____________________

____________________

____________________

____________________

**Eligibility criteria:** ____________________

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____________________

____________________

**Assessment/entry procedures:** ____________________

____________________

____________________

____________________

**What are the program's curriculum and instructional methods?**

**Curriculum area:** ____________________

____________________

____________________

____________________

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Instructional methods:

What are the program's design and operations?

Design of services:

Support services:

Staff roles and responsibilities:

**What is the program's plan for community involvement?**

**What are the program's exit procedures?**

**Exit criteria:**

**Exit procedures:**

**Transition plans:**

**What is the program's plan for evaluation?**

# APPENDIX B

## Example of a Written Program Description

## Example of a Written Program Description

The following example was taken from the Lane Education Service District's program description for a teacher-consultant program. The Lane Education Service District (ESD) is an intermediate education unit that serves students with disabilities in Lane County, Oregon, with its headquarters in Eugene.

### Philosophy

The Lane ESD Teacher Consultant Program adheres to the tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which states that all students with disabilities have a right to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. One implication of that legislation is that constituent districts provide a full continuum of special education services for all students with disabilities. A typical continuum of services includes itinerant, resource room, self-contained classroom, separate school, residential, and home-bound instruction. Lane ESD teacher consultants are committed to assisting districts in the improvement, expansion, and maintenance of the full continuum service model.

The Lane ESD teacher consultation model employs a student-centered approach. Every effort is made to maintain students with serious behavior problems in their home school environment. If more intensive educational alternatives are required, the teacher consultant will assist personnel in the referral, certification, and transition of students between a segregated special education program (Lane School) and the home school district.

### Program Goals

The primary goal of the Lane ESD Teacher Consultation Program is to assist district personnel in the identification and assessment of problem situations and to develop and implement educational strategies that increase the opportunities for students with behavioral problems to succeed in their home school.

Other program goals are as follows:

1. To provide equitable access to consultative services for all Lane County school districts.
2. To provide a standardized set of consultation, referral, placement, and transition procedures.
3. To provide clearly defined consultative roles and responsibilities.
4. To provide a system for increasing accountability and efficiency in assessment, intervention, placement, and transition of students with behavioral difficulties.

## Student Needs and Identification

The target population consists of students who are exhibiting serious behavior problems in the school setting. Most students have been classified as having serious emotional disturbances, but because of the program's noncategorical emphasis, students with other disability labels are eligible as long as a multidisciplinary team has determined that because of their behavior and emotional needs they could benefit from the program's curriculum and methods.

To access services of the teacher consultant, district personnel must complete a "Request for Assistance" form that reports identifying information and is signed by the school principal or designee. If the Request for Assistance is complete and judged appropriate, it is signed by the program supervisor. The child is then added to the teacher consultant's caseload.

As part of the student assessment process, the teacher consultant conducts a file review, performs direct observations of student behavior, and interviews school staff. This information is used in developing an individualized behavior plan.

## Instructional Curriculum and Methods

The teacher consultant program employs two classes of interventions: classroom and individualized. Classroom interventions are strategies designed to modify or strengthen a teacher's basic classroom and instructional management practices. These interventions usually focus on practices commonly found in effective classrooms and may improve the academic and social behavior of the referred student as well as the other students in a given classroom or school environment. Examples of general classroom interventions include setting clear expectations, developing academic and behavioral goals, using assignment sheets, and increasing positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior.

Individualized interventions are specific behavioral strategies that are designed to improve an individual student's performance in the classroom and school environment when basic classroom and instructional management practices are intact. Examples of individualized interventions include developing behavior contracts, teaching social skills, and using a point system to reward and consequate targeted behaviors.

Teacher consultants meet with building staff to develop an intervention, and they assist classroom teachers by providing training in its implementation. Finally, teacher consultants meet with building staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the selected intervention strategy.

## Program Operation and Design

The consultation process consists of the following five basic steps:

1. Request for assistance.
2. Problem analysis and data collection.
3. Intervention development and implementation.
4. Intervention monitoring and progress evaluation.
5. Intervention termination.

These steps are summarized in a flow chart and defined in detail.

The teacher consultants are directly responsible to and directed by the program supervisor. Teacher consultants help teachers to

- Develop prereferral and referral systems to serve students with behavior problems.
- Develop and implement individualized education programs.
- Use effective procedures for managing student behavior in classroom and school environments.
- Develop and implement programs for students with behavior problems.
- Prevent and remediate behavior problems in students.

## Community Involvement

In an attempt to coordinate services for students with behavior problems, teacher consultants work closely with numerous external agencies including Division of Youth Services, Family Services, Drug Rehabilitation Programs, Job Core, Direction Services, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Each of these services is described fully in the program manual under the following headings: (a) Agency, (b) Eligibility Criteria, (c) Description of Service, and (d) Anticipated Outcomes.

In addition, teacher consultants regularly communicate with parents and multidisciplinary team members about students' performance across school settings.

## Exit

Termination of consultative services is triggered by two conditions: (1) successful intervention with follow-up and maintenance activities for the period of one year, or (2) teacher resistance to the consultation process.

Typically, teacher consultants follow students through prereferral, referral, and the certification process and continue to assist school staff in the development of effective programming strategies until the staff are well trained and confident in their ability to manage students in the school setting. Termination of consultant services in these instances is based on the implementation of maintenance activities, gradual fading strategies, and intermittent observations and feedback to the teacher.

However, in the event that the recipient teacher repeatedly fails to implement the agreed upon interventions, and the failure to implement cannot be attributed to skill deficits but rather overt verbal or behavioral resistance to the consultation process, the teacher consultant may, after consulting with the program supervisor, withdraw from the consultation process, thereby terminating it. Although rare, such instances are considered to be "problems in classroom supervision" and not "problems in consultation" and are handed over to the principal or program supervisor.

**Evaluation**

The teacher consultant program uses two types of evaluation: formative and summative. Formative evaluation is informal and ongoing, occurring at least one time per week, if not more often. Summative evaluation is conducted once every 3 years by external personnel from the University of Oregon.

Three aspects of the program are evaluated: staff, students, and the program itself.

- Staff evaluations are conducted annually. The evaluation process consists of a pre-evaluation meeting, three formal, 40-minute observations, and post observation meetings. Information is recorded on a professional performance evaluation form and placed in the person's file.

- Student evaluation is multifaceted and consists of the collection and review of data in a number of areas: (a) archival (attendance, incident reports, etc.), (b) observations, (c) functional analyses, (d) daily behavior charts, and (e) academic grades. Teacher consultants conduct teacher conferences and direct observations of student behavior to evaluate the effectiveness of the behavior interventions.

- Program evaluation consists of weekly data gathering on the consultation process, discussion with teacher consultants, and decision making for improving the program. Key personnel in the local districts are informed of any changes made; these persons include special education directors and principals and may include vice-principals, psychologists, counselors, and teachers.

### Chapter 3

## Interagency Collaboration

*Stephen W. Tonelson and Rebecca Waters*

### INTRODUCTION

Under present service provision systems, many special education students, and other students who are not labeled as exceptional, are referred from one agency to another in order to obtain services. Despite this, research indicates that difficulties with interagency collaboration continue to be of great concern (Florida Mental Health Institute, 1988 - 1989). In order to optimize the quality of services and use all resources efficiently in providing equal opportunity for students, it is essential that collaborative programs be developed -- programs that blend the funding and services provided by specific agencies. This chapter acquaints the education administrator with the what, why, and how of interagency collaboration by addressing the following questions:

1. **What is interagency collaboration?**
2. **Why is there a need for interagency collaboration?**
3. **How can interagency collaboration be implemented?**
4. **What is the administrator's role in interagency collaboration?**

### 1. WHAT IS INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

Presently, efforts to combine community resources to meet the needs of students with disabilities include a continuum of service integration models ranging from informal coordination to formal, written interagency agreements. Simple service coordination may be limited to workers who combine efforts on a particular case to meet the needs of a particular individual. Additionally, cooperative efforts may be organized to require mutual agreement between individuals or organizations that remain separate and autonomous. Collaboration, however, is different from a simple service agreement. Collaboration involves "joint planning, joint implementation, and joint evaluation between individuals or organizations" (New England Program in Teacher Education, 1973, as cited in Hord, 1986). However, like a service agreement, collaboration may occur at the system level or the client level. This chapter addresses interagency collaboration mainly at the system level.

System-level collaboration is based on the fact that no one agency can provide all necessary services for children with disabilities and their families. For example, a child with mild mental retardation typically has his or her educational needs met by the school. However, when a family problem precludes the child's living with his or her parent(s) and/or a health problem occurs in conjunction with the mental retardation, the school system is not expected to provide all necessary services. In order for the school to maximize this child's educational chances, social services will have to become involved. The Health Department may also need to be involved in order to ameliorate the child's health problem. Therefore, agencies must collaborate at the system level to provide effective and efficient services. This level of collaboration provides support for the school from other agencies to facilitate the education process.

A second common scenario is the transition from school to the workforce. To facilitate this transition, the school and rehabilitative services must collaborate to maximize the possibility of success. The role of the school is to provide necessary prerequisite skills to increase the likelihood that work can be found and maintained. The school system collaborates with rehabilitative services to secure a job for the student.

A third scenario may involve the juvenile probation and court system with the schools. In this case, an individual who has committed a crime and has been placed on probation is required to attend school as a criterion for probation. The school benefits in that the child must attend classes, and probation benefits in that while the child is in school he or she is more likely to learn and less likely to commit a second offense.

Typically, as can be seen from the preceding examples, system-level collaboration can include the school system, the juvenile probation and court system, social services, the health department, recreation, and rehabilitation services. For some children, all or a majority of these agencies may need to be involved in order to best meet the needs of the child and family. For other children, fewer agencies may need to collaborate.

At the client level, educators and other service providers first assess the child. Once the assessment has been completed, this team and the parent(s) write an individualized education program (IEP) designating the specific goals and objectives of all interventions. At this level, collaboration is necessary in order to ensure that all IEP goals are addressed effectively and efficiently.

In a collaborative effort, all contributing parties must see the necessity and usefulness of collaboration in order to achieve successful programming. Joint ownership and responsibility can be accomplished by requiring that all participants contribute an appropriate share of the resources needed while considering the constraints, requirements, and discretionary authority of each participating agency. Interagency collaboration requires commitment and hard work. It is essential to understand each agency's philosophy, how services are provided, and the regulations under which each agency operates. Only when all participants understand these issues can interagency collaboration succeed.

## 2. WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

Historically, most community agencies have not coordinated services. Each agency in a community sets goals and implements programs without communicating with other appropriate agencies. This lack of communication results in a lack of coordination of services. However, coordination among agencies can help to ensure a continuation of services for students with disabilities. Stroul and Friedman (1986) set forth principles for a system of care that can be provided only through commitment to collaboration. They suggested that a system of care must be child centered, with the needs of child and family dictating the types and mix of services provided, and that "the system of care should be community-based, with the locus of services as well as the management and decision-making responsibility resting at the community level" (p. 17).

Research has indicated that fragmented services fail to consider the need to use all existing resources to provide comprehensive, child-centered services. It is only when agencies collaborate that maximum benefits are provided to help students achieve their potential in terms of independence and self-reliance. Fragmented services are not only less effective, but also more costly in terms of fiscal and human resources.

### Legislative Impact

Federal legislation enacted in 1966, Public Law 89-750 (the Education of the Handicapped Act) (EHA), has evolved into legislation and mandates assuring equal rights for individuals with disabilities. More recent and more commonly known legislation, including Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), Public Law 99-457 [the Handicapped Infant and Toddler Program (Part H)], and Public Law 101-476 [the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)], require interagency collaboration in providing comprehensive services to students with disabilities. These federal mandates, as implemented by the U.S. Department of Education, require that:

- The financial responsibilities of each agency be defined in the state plan.
- Procedures be outlined for resolving interagency disputes.
- Reduction in fiscal contributions under other federal programs such as Medicaid be prohibited.

- Nonsupplanting provisions be enlarged to include noneducational resources (P.L. 99-457).

Under Part H of EHA (P.L. 99-457), the governor of each state is required to designate a lead agency to administer the Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers (birth to age 2) and establish an Interagency Coordinating Council (Ballard, Ramirez, & Zantal-Weiner et al., 1987). Besides early intervention services, education agencies must collaborate with other agencies in the delivery of many other services to students with disabilities. These services may include any of the related services to which students are entitled or planning and implementation of transition programs.

**Fiscal Consideration**

The federal laws provide full service mandates for all students who have exceptionalities or are at risk for school failure and families. These mandates leave state and local communities with the obligation to provide for programs and services to individuals with disabilities, regardless of cost. In order to provide the most effective programs and demonstrate accountability of results, it is essential for interagency cooperation to exist. These mandates are to provide for a system of comprehensive and cost-effective programs designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.

**Benefits of Interagency Collaboration**

The agencies involved and the community benefit when collaboration is achieved and programs and services are coordinated (Canham, 1979, as cited in Missouri LINC, 1989). Some of these benefits include the following:

- *A reduction in service duplication*. Frequently, as individuals continue to seek help from agency after agency, duplication of assistance and services occurs. This duplication results in wasted efforts, which could be avoided by outlining explicitly who is responsible for which specific tasks.

- *Fewer service gaps or oversights*. Even with several agencies delivering services, there is no insurance that all needs are being addressed. One agency may believe that another service provider is providing for needs that, in fact, are not being met. Interagency collaboration provides for feedback and mutual exchange of ideas as well as reducing the number of overlaps and/or gaps in service.

- *Minimization of conflict/clarification of responsibility*. Agencies that share ideas and information and coordinate efforts in structured collaboration avoid the misinterpretations of needs to be met that often occur when organizations are operating independently. Not only can interagency collaboration offer a clearer understanding of each agency's goals and purposes, the collaborative process more clearly outlines the needs of the individual as they relate to the service providers.

- *Reduction of the total cost of services*. Interagency collaboration is the most effective method for realizing fiscal accountability. As all service provision agencies face budget reductions, creative interagency collaboration is necessary to continue to provide services to children with disabilities and their families.

**Pitfalls of Interagency Collaboration**

Endeavors to establish a coordinated interagency effort may be frustrated by bureaucratic entanglements. It is generally agreed that to meet the complex needs of individuals with disabilities, collaboration is essential. However, the following issues represent pitfalls that any interagency collaboration effort may encounter.

*Turf Issues*. The roles of the various individuals and/or agencies who work with persons with disabilities rarely are defined clearly. Mental health, health, social services, education, juvenile justice, recreation, and vocational rehabilitation all are services that may need to interact in order to meet the needs of clients. However, each agency frequently has limited knowledge regarding the roles of the other agencies and wishes to protect the integrity of its own services. Often this lack of communication causes turf issues, and the result is that children and families fall between the cracks (Coleman, 1992).

*Lack of Clarity on "Dollar" Issues*. Limited financial resources often cause major problems during interagency collaboration. In order to ameliorate these problems, there are several ways to allocate resources collaboratively. A brief summary of methods outlined by Hodge (1981) to ameliorate problems associated with finance include the following:

- *First dollar agreements*. An agreement is made determining which agency pays first. Usually, this is the agency with primary service provision responsibility.

- *Complementary dollar agreements*. A commitment is made for each organization to pay appropriately for certain services in order to ameliorate child and family problems in the most effective way.

- *Complementary personnel/dollar agreements*. An organization commits personnel to provide services for children and families while other organizations reserve funds to pay for additional necessary and appropriate services.

- *Shared personnel agreements*. Personnel from different agencies work together in order to provide necessary services.

- *Shared facility agreements*. One agency may provide space for a second agency to provide services. For example, public schools may offer space for mental health counseling to take place.

- *Shared equipment and materials agreements*. One agency may share equipment and/or materials with a second agency. For example, hospital equipment may be used to screen children prior to entry into public school.

*Unclear Priorities/Inconsistent Service Standards*. Specific agreements addressing common goals, as well as quality of service standards, are absolute prerequisites to successful collaborative agreements. Commitments must be made with regard to the activity of each agency in terms of the needs of the individual, the needs of the family, and the capacity of the cooperating agencies to respond appropriately to these needs.

*Lack of Communication Across Disciplines*. For interagency collaboration to be effective, a structure designed to accommodate knowledge-sharing across all involved agencies must be designed and implemented. Differences in background and training of staff, agency terminology, the legal and ethical restraints of each agency, and labeling of individuals with disabilities all impede effective communication.

## 3. HOW CAN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION BE IMPLEMENTED?

The ultimate goal of interagency collaboration is to coordinate programs and services for individuals with disabilities and their families who receive or require services from more than one provider agency. There is no magic recipe for implementing interagency collaboration, nor is there a "right way" or a "wrong way." Each school division, agency, or service provider may choose to develop its own collaborative model, duplicate an existing model, or modify a model to suit its own needs. Regardless of the method chosen to develop a team, the organizational structure and the strategies to be used must be reached through mutual agreement of all agencies involved.

Adapted from Lacour (1982), the following strategies or preconditions may help to prevent or resolve problems associated with interagency agreements. Specifically, all participants and agencies involved at the system level should

- Have a positive attitude toward collaboration and place a high priority on ameliorating student and family problems.

- Recognize a need for collaboration.
- Be informed about relevant laws.
- Get to know other interagency participants and establish a positive relationship with them.
- Learn the responsibilities of each agency and how each agency works.
- Identify the resources to be shared or exchanged and ensure that interagency agreements are reasonable.
- Be aware of the mutual benefit of interagency collaboration and resource sharing or exchange.
- Have a capacity for maintaining interagency collaboration and coordination.
- Put the agreement in writing in order to reinforce the commitment of participating agencies.
- Devise and implement evaluation procedures for the components of the agreement.
- Devise procedures for terminating the agreement if an agency wishes to withdraw.

Given these strategies, it is important to remember that mandated collaboration cannot require that participant attitudes be positive. However, for mandated collaboration to succeed, the interagency team must be convinced of the importance of collaboration and be provided with the resources needed to design, implement, and evaluate designated tasks.

### Common Elements in Planning

Interagency collaboration agreements may differ depending on the size, location, and mission of the intervention. However, several common planning elements exist that contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of collaborative efforts.

*Philosophical Stance*. The philosophy of a team as well as of the individual team members not only provides the stimulus for interagency collaboration and cooperation, but also shapes the service delivery model.

*Written Guidelines*. A written statement delineating roles, responsibilities, shared financial resources, facilities, and time is essential to a comprehensive, systematized collaborative program. Informal coordination may be accomplished without putting anything in writing, but anything on a larger scale must have written clarification to avoid conflicts that could result from different interpretations of legislative mandates.

*Mutual Need and Desire for Collaboration*. Mandated agency collaboration will not be effective unless all participants view interagency collaboration as necessary and appropriate. Everyone involved also must be convinced of the importance of interagency collaboration, and the resources necessary to accomplish each task must be made available. Without a feeling of joint ownership, conflict and problems will erupt that will seriously limit the effectiveness of the program.

*Staff Development*. Cross-agency staff development can foster understanding of different agency policies, mandates, and restrictions as well as help in the development of roles and responsibilities for interagency team members. Staff development also should address communication and conflict resolution in order to enhance the working relationship among team members.

*Team Leadership*. Without someone assigned to provide direction and leadership for the team, there is little hope for success. Leadership functions may be shared by agencies, possibly on a rotating basis, but there must always be someone assigned as coordinator to ensure that necessary tasks are accomplished, keep the channels of communication open among all parties, take care of paperwork, provide technical assistance, and troubleshoot as necessary. The coordinator helps to ensure that agency representatives do not get caught up in their own concerns and thwart the cooperative effort (Missouri LINC, 1989).

**Development of Interagency Collaboration**

After agencies have established a common need and a commitment to collaborate, a team that will be both efficient and effective must be developed. McLaughlin (as cited in Missouri LINC, 1989) has suggested that to be effective, planners must begin with a plan that delineates reasonable expectations. The interagency collaboration must be implemented in a systematic manner, and communication among agencies must persist beyond implementation. To develop a team at the client level successfully, a number of steps must be considered. These steps begin with assessing the child and writing the IEP. They include the following:

- *Identifying participant agencies*. Once necessary and appropriate services for children with disabilities and their families have been determined, the agencies that are best able to provide these services must be identified. At the system level, most interagency collaboration teams will begin with the public schools, mental health, juvenile and domestic court services, public health, and social services. Vocational rehabilitation, as well as other postsecondary service providers, also should be an integral part of the team. At the client level, identified child and family needs would determine which of the specific agencies would be involved. For a young child, specific agencies may include the schools to address academic needs, public health to address medical needs, and social services to address family needs. Probation and/or the court system may also be involved if the child has been adjudicated for a crime. For an individual making the transition from school to the workforce, the schools would be involved to address academic and training needs, social services might be involved to address living arrangements, and rehabilitation services would be involved to address job training and placement concerns. Finally, public health, probation, and/or the court system may be involved depending on the specific needs of the individual.

- *Selecting representatives to the team*. Agency representatives on the interagency collaboration team should possess decision-making authority within their own agencies. In addition to good communication skills, adaptability, and flexibility, they should have the capacity to commit themselves to the endeavors of the team for an extended period of time. Each representative should be a team player and should be able to gain personal satisfaction from the team's success. At the client level the parents should be involved to help determine appropriate goals and reinforce specific intervention strategies. Pragmatically, parent participation may facilitate the accomplishment of intervention goals in three distinct ways. First, the child may have needs that can be addressed most appropriately in an ecological fashion. Second, as team members the parents may feel a vested interest in the intervention procedures, thus facilitating the implementation process. Finally, the parents may have needs of their own that must be addressed.

- *Establishing a global mission/goal*. A clearly stated purpose is essential for the success of any team. This statement of purpose should be *written* in clear and understandable language and include reasons for the interagency agreement, responsibilities of each agency as well as methods for carrying them out, performance standards, and methods for modifying the agreement if necessary. The statement should be written to reflect and directly focus on the desired outcomes. Benefits to individual agencies must be clear, and mutual benefits must be evident. The collaborative agreement should include a plan for evaluating to what extent the goals are being met (LaCour, 1982; McLaughlin & Covert, 1984) (see Chapter 11).

- *Developing team identity*. To be effective, a team must work toward building trusting, open relationships wherein each of the team members is accepting of the others and their roles on the team. There must be team ownership, loyalty, and a clear understanding of the inner workings of each of the agencies involved. Each team member also must be committed. A process for decision making and conflict resolution should be determined in advance.

## 4. WHAT IS THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

The education administrator's role in the interagency process is to act as the catalyst and supporter to promote interagency collaboration. Since the public school is the only agency serving children and youth in which public law mandates zero rejects, it is reasonable to assume that education should be the catalyst to promote interagency collaboration. The public school administrator provides a direct link to the child, who is in the care of the school a minimum of 5 1/2 hours per day, and to the child's family. There is ample evidence to support the hypothesis that the school system should function as the primary service provider to promote interagency communication and cooperation in providing services for a community's children (Audette, n.d.).

Since the enactment of P.L. 94-142 in the middle 1970s, public education has worked diligently toward developing and implementing programs to address the needs of previously underserved or unserved youngsters. The efforts to serve these children have been successful in providing services within the school setting for most students with disabilities.

## SUMMARY

This chapter acquaints the education administrator with the what, why, and how of interagency collaboration. Interagency collaboration involves joint planning, implementing, and evaluating between individuals and organizations in order to provide services for children with disabilities and their families. It is conducted on the system level or the client level. System-level collaboration is based on the premise that no one agency can provide all necessary services for children with disabilities and their families.

The need for interagency collaboration arises from the fact that community agencies historically do not coordinate services, which results in services that are less effective and more costly than they need to be. The Education of the Handicapped Act, enacted in 1966, and later legislation including Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 99-457, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act assure equal rights for individuals with disabilities. These laws also mandate that schools provide programs and services to individuals with disabilities. Interagency collaboration, as mandated by this legislation, has been determined to be the most effective and efficient manner in which to provide appropriate services.

Once agencies have determined a need to collaborate, team members must designate a plan with reasonable expectations for success. This plan must then be implemented systematically. During the implementation phase, communication among agencies must persist.

The education administrator's role in the interagency collaboration process is to act as the catalyst. Since the public schools are the only agency serving children in which public law mandates zero rejects, it is reasonable to assume that the schools should be the catalyst to promote interagency collaboration.

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## Chapter 4

# Collaborating with Families

*Naomi Karp*

## INTRODUCTION

The 1980s produced a series of changes that will upgrade the quality of public education in the United States in the 1990s. Two key factors that have shaped these changes are

1. Awareness that public education must be restructured, with enduring systemic changes, yielding higher quality programs and improved student outcomes (Lezotte, 1989).

2. Increased recognition that family involvement is necessary if student outcomes are to improve (Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985; Henderson, 1988; Lipsky, 1989).

In addition, the 1980s gave rise to a new way of thinking about family involvement. The concept of family-centered services (Shelton, Jeppson, & Johnson, 1987) emerged from the field of health care for children and youth with disabilities and chronic illnesses. These new attitudes are grounded in the belief that the family and child with special needs are at the center of the delivery system; the services revolve around and support them (Turnbull, Turnbull, Summers, Brotherson, & Benson, 1986). It is now time to move family-centered approaches beyond the health care world and to incorporate them into educational policies and practices.

This chapter gives administrators information about values-based, family-centered programs that will involve *all* families and improve education programs and student outcomes. The main areas of discussion include:

1. **What is collaboration with families?**

2. **What are families' rights and responsibilities in the educational process?**

3. **Why are new ideas and models needed for collaborating with families?**

4. **What are best practices and strategies for collaborating with families?**

## 1. WHAT IS COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES?

Increased recognition of the importance of family involvement in schools has been a key ingredient in current education reform initiatives. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) *requires* family involvement during the special education process. In addition to IDEA's mandate that families be genuine partners and collaborators in their children's education process, state and local education agencies also mandate that families be involved in advisory capacities in the development of policies and state and federal plans (Anderson, Chitwood, & Hayden, 1990b). It is the family's right and responsibility to participate with the schools in order to help their children develop to the fullest extent possible (Ordover & Boundy, 1991; Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, 1991b).

Therefore, a good working partnership between family and school is necessary to ensure that (a) students have positive, successful outcomes; (b) the spirit and intent of the law are met; and (c) families' rights are guaranteed. In order to reach these three goals, it is necessary to examine collaboration, families, and values-based principles more closely.

### Understanding Collaboration

Over the past 15 years, the words involvement, partners, and collaboration seem to have taken on lives of their own as education and other fields try to find effective ways to work with families. The literature is replete with definitions of the three words, with each definition reflecting a slightly different perspective. For example, Portland State University researchers have identified the following elements of collaboration (Staff, 1988):

- Mutual respect for knowledge and skills.
- Honest and clear communication.
- Understanding and empathy.
- Mutually agreed upon goals.
- Shared planning and decision making.
- Open and two-way sharing of information.
- Accessibility and responsiveness.
- Joint evaluation of progress.
- Absence of labeling and blaming.

Based on these elements, a checklist developed by the staff at the Research and Training Center for Family Support and Children's Mental Health at Portland (OR) State University is used by mental health professionals and families to see whether they are truly collaborators (Staff, 1988). Figure 1 shows how the checklist has been adapted for use by educators and administrators.

## Figure 1

## Collaboration Checklist for Professionals and Families

| FOR PROFESSIONALS | FOR FAMILIES* |
|---|---|
| • Do I believe that a family is my equal and, in fact, is an expert on the student? | • Do I believe I am an equal partner with professionals and accept my share of the responsibility for solving problems and making plans on behalf of my child? |
| • Do I show the same respect for the value of families' time as I do for my own time by educating myself about an individual student before a conference about that student? | • Do I clearly express the needs of my child and family to professionals in an assertive way? |
| • Do I speak plainly and avoid jargon? | • Do I treat each professional as an individual and avoid letting past negative attitudes and experiences get in the way of a good working relationship? |
| • Do I actively involve the family in the development of the student's IEP? | • Do I communicate quickly with the school when significant changes or notable events occur? |
| • Do I make appointments and schedule conferences that are convenient for families? | • When I make a commitment to the school for a plan of action, do I follow through and complete that commitment? |
| • Do I share necessary information with other professionals to ensure that services are not duplicated and that families do not spend valuable energy searching for providers and services? | • Do I maintain realistic expectations for professionals, my child, and myself? |

* *Note.* Revised by Naomi Karp with permission from Focal Point (Winter, 1992, pp. 1-3).

The questions in Figure 1 contain values that reflect respect, empathy, and *consideration for others. The questions for professionals have a family-centered* flavor that indicates a supportive concern for the family and the child with disabilities. Administrators and educators might want to share these checklists with families at the start of the school year or throughout the school year to establish and reinforce a spirit of collaboration and partnership.

Another definition of partnership and collaboration focuses on the recognition that both parties have special skills and knowledge to contribute to improving programs and services that will benefit the child. This means that their roles complement each other. There is also a feeling of mutual respect, a shared purpose, joint decision-making, and flexibility in working with each other (Lipsky, 1989). Again, these ideas are supportive of families and reflect a family-centered philosophy.

A third definition of collaboration relates successful schools to the presence of families as equal partners on those schools' collaborative teams (Thousand & Villa, 1989). Moreover, families are considered active members who contribute to their child's educational planning. When schools do not see families as equal partners, there is limited access to the valuable resources that families offer in terms of identifying their child's strengths and needs, planning effective programs, and evaluating outcomes (Thousand & Villa, 1989).

In summary, collaborating with or involving families in their child's educational program tends to result in positive outcomes for the child, improved emotional well-being of the families, increased parenting skills, and strengthening of the educational program itself (Cone et al., 1985; Lipsky, 1989; Turnbull, 1983). A Vermont parent of a student with disabilities perhaps best summarized why family-professional collaboration based on family-centered principles is vital: "Parents should be thought of as scholars of experience. We are in it for the distance. We see and feel the continuum. We have our doctorate in perseverance. We and the system must be in concert or the vision shrinks" (D. Sylvester in Thousand & Villa, 1989, p. 100).

## Understanding the Family

The composition of the family is no longer the stereotypical mom, dad, two kids, and a dog. Rather, it may be a single parent who relies on a maternal grandmother for child-rearing help; a teenage couple who speak little English; or any configuration of people living under the same roof. Therefore, it is essential that administrators and educators think about so-called "parent" collaboration in new ways.

One of the first steps toward a new way of thinking is to use new language. The term *parents* should be replaced with *family*, since so many children do not live with both parents, or, in many cases, with either parent. A broad, inclusive definition of family should be used when schools are trying to involve adults who are responsible for a child's well-being. In 1991, 38 family leaders at the Second Family Leadership Conference recommended a new, inclusive definition of family (Family and Integration Resources, 1991):

> A family is a group of people who are important to each other and offer each other love and support, especially in times of crises. In order to be sensitive to the wide range of life styles, living arrangements, and cultural variations that exist today, family in OSERS' programs no longer can be limited to just parent/child relationships. Therefore, family involvement in OSERS must reach out to include: mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters, brothers, neighbors, and other persons who have important roles in the lives of people with disabilities (p. 37).

The inclusiveness of this definition gives administrators and educators an opportunity to reach out to those persons living with the child who may be of help and support to the child's progress and success in school. Confidentiality issues arise, but the legal guardian or parent can give written permission to allow the school to involve other persons as part of the child's circle of support. The more inclusive and supportive the adults are, the greater the chances for improving outcomes for children, particularly children who are vulnerable and at-risk.

Furthermore, amendments to the original legislation have set a precedent for the use of the term family. The Part H and Section 619 portions of IDEA do not refer to "parents"; they refer to "families." This type of latitude allows the people with whom a child is living to choose important family and support system members to participate in educational decision making.

### The Need for a Values Base in Education

In its 1989 Report to the President, the National Council on Disability found that "parent-professional relationships too often are strained and difficult, and families and professionals frequently view one another as adversaries rather than partners" (West, 1989, p. 15). When families and schools have antagonistic working relationships, chances for improving student outcomes are diminished. When values-based, family-centered strategies are developed, the quality of student outcomes and family-school relationships will improve. Leaders in the community integration movement also have found that, in addition to legislation, if a program is to be successful, the professionals involved must have values and commitment (Racino, 1990; Taylor, Racino, Knoll, & Lutfiyya, 1987).

### Meeting the Need

All school systems have a value base. Too frequently, however, these values are not clearly defined and well articulated (Pearpoint, 1989). Therefore, if the quality of educational programs, student outcomes, and collaboration with families is to improve, administrators and their staffs should jointly develop a vision and a set of values pertaining to students and their families.

When adopting a set of value statements about students and families, administrators should ask themselves the following important questions:

- Would I want my son or daughter to be in this school or program?
- If I were this child, how would I want to be treated?
- If this were my family at the IEP meeting, how would I want to be treated?

Ideally, the answers should guide administrators' actions.

**Values and Family-Centered Principles**

It is important that educational planning teams believe in a common set of values. Some basic values that educators may want to jointly articulate about students and families include the following:

- All children and youth are to be valued as people.
- All children and youth have strengths, can learn, and can make positive contributions to their families, friends, and society.
- It is up to educators to identify and build upon each child's strengths so that the child's learning can be maximized.
- All families have a variety of strengths and coping skills that should also be identified and enhanced.
- Diversity and individual differences among people are to be valued and respected.
- Families are sources of wisdom and knowledge about their children and should be recognized as experts.
- The values, choices, and preferences of families should be respected.
- Families are a constant in children's lives and must be equal partners in *all* decisions affecting the child's educational program. Professionals are to support, not supplant, the family.

After the professional staff develops a set of values regarding students and families, administrators may want to have the values posted in a visible place in the school or administrative building. They will be examples of family-centered principles that, when operationalized by district and/or building staff, will demonstrate to all families that they and their children are respected and valued. This will help lay the foundation for a positive, collaborative partnership between families and educators.

## 2. WHAT ARE FAMILIES' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS?

Prior to the passage and implementation of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), families had few legally prescribed rights in their children's educational programs (Anderson, Chitwood, & Hayden 1990a, 1990b). Schools had the final say regarding the enrollment of students with disabilities as well as the types of programs they were receiving. Today, however, educators and administrators need to be familiar with the rights guaranteed to families under EAHCA and succeeding amendments as well as how families can be equals in educational decision-making processes (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1978, 1985). These significant pieces of legislation and their contributions to families' rights are discussed in chronological order in the following section. Educators and administrators should be familiar with the rights guaranteed to families under EAHCA and succeeding amendments. The writings of Turnbull and Turnbull (1978, 1985) clearly lay out families' rights as well as how families can be equals in educational decision-making processes.

### Education for All Handicapped Children Act

After the enactment of EAHCA in 1975, students with disabilities were guaranteed a free and appropriate public education. In addition, families and professional educators were to be partners in the development of Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities. Furthermore, the legislation guaranteed families the rights to due process, prior notice and consent, access to records, and participation in decision making (Anderson et al., 1990b; ARC Georgia, 1988).

Congress included strong support in EAHCA for family involvement for two reasons (Anderson et al., 1990b):

1. To give families potential control to prevent erroneous decisions that might be made during the course of the special education process. This is a regulatory purpose to ensure that school officials carry out their duties under the law correctly.

2. To ensure that families are more than rubber stamps in the IEP process. This is an affirmative purpose. Congressional intent was to make sure that the IEP process included more than "in consultation with families."

**Handicapped Children's Protection Act**

After establishing basic rights for families through EAHCA, Congress added additional rights with the 1986 Handicapped Children's Protection Act. This act affirms that special education laws do not limit any protections and rights guaranteed by the Constitution or any federal statutes. It also allows parents who prevail in a due process hearing or court suit against a school division to collect attorney's fees. Additionally, this law allows payment of fees for work attorneys did prior to a due process hearing.

**Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers**

The EAHCA was reauthorized and amended in 1986 as Public Law 99-457, Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers, and important provisions for children from birth through 5 years of age and their families were added (Anderson et al., 1990a; ARC Georgia, 1988). Part H of the law addresses the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities or who are at risk of developmental delays. Children from birth to 3 years of age may be served by states that apply for funds to plan, develop, and implement statewide, comprehensive, multidisciplinary early intervention programs. The following additional rights for families are mandated:

- Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), which focus on the family unit, must be developed by a multidisciplinary team, with the family members as active participants. The family's concerns, priorities, and resources are to be identified, goals and timelines included, and the services to be used listed. The family must have a designated case manager, with dates shown for when services will begin and end. There must be yearly evaluations of the child, a review of the IFSP every 6 months, and a plan for moving into an appropriate preschool program by the child's third birthday.

- Procedural safeguards for families are continued.

Part B, Section 619, mandates that states serve *all* children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 5 and permits *noncategorical services*, meaning that a child does not have to have a label in order to receive services. Parent training is an allowable expenditure. Children may be served according to their families' needs, allowing a local education agency to contract with other agencies and programs to provide a flexible, wide range of services.

The Early Intervention Amendment to EAHCA has been extremely important in fostering collaboration based on values and family-centered approaches. It speaks about the "family," not just the mother-father or "parent" unit, and allows for flexibility in funding and service provision while addressing the strengths of the child and family. Families' choices are to be considered in all decisions. These legislative changes to the original Act set the tone for truly collaborative partnerships between school and home.

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

In 1990, Congress further amended EAHCA under Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The same procedural safeguards and rights afforded to young children, students, and families under the original statute were protected. The overall result of these legislative actions has been increased participation in the community by children and adults with disabilities and their families. The general public has come to see people with disabilities in a new light. People with a variety of special needs now take part in regular community activities. The idea that people with disabilities have rights and capabilities and can contribute to their communities is beginning to take hold (Comegys, 1989). In addition, as a result of litigation and legislation, citizens with disabilities and their families have become skilled advocates, securing and reinforcing their rights in their communities (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Scheerenberger, 1987).

### Meeting the Spirit of the Law

Parent rights, as guaranteed under the *letter* of the law, have been clarified and strengthened by decisions handed down by the courts and by statutory amendments (Anderson et al., 1990b; Martin, 1991; Ordover & Boundy, 1991). The *spirit* of the law is met when school administrators and educators develop positive, collaborative relationships with the families of students with disabilities (Anderson et al., 1990b; West, 1989). These relationships are often difficult to achieve and maintain because the portions of the law that guarantee specific rights and safeguards are also areas that tend to cause friction between families and school personnel. These areas include notification, consent, and participation during the referral, evaluation, eligibility, IEP, annual review, and triennial evaluation phases of the special education process (Anderson et al., 1990b; Lipsky, 1989).

Too frequently, families believe that they must acquiesce to the professionals' advice or decisions about their children's educational programs. Most of the reasons for this passivity are rooted in the fact that families are unaware of their rights and procedural safeguards under the law (West, 1989). On the other hand, many administrators and educators perceive that family participation ranges from families wanting to be in complete control to a total lack of interest in the process and the issues (Anderson et al., 1990b). Administrators of high-quality educational programs are constantly seeking ways to meet the spirit of IDEA by searching for ways to collaborate meaningfully with families in order to improve outcomes for students and the quality of educational programs.

## 3. WHY ARE NEW IDEAS AND MODELS NEEDED FOR COLLABORATING WITH FAMILIES?

Administrators today face challenges that are entirely different from those faced by their colleagues 15 to 20 years ago. Over the past two decades, many significant changes have taken place in society in general and in the field of education specifically. Some of the specific societal changes deal with accepting, honoring, and respecting diversity and differences, honoring others' choices and preferences, and improving student outcomes. These changes have been influenced by the emergence of the new American family, the increasing heterogeneity of the United States, and increased accountability for student performance and outcomes.

These changing times require new ideas, new language, and new models for improving the quality of education, reaching out to and collaborating with families, and improving students' outcomes. Today's administrators have to be able to listen to families with special needs and honor and respect the families' goals and visions for their children's futures. The following section examines some of the societal and educational changes and discusses how a values-based, family-centered education program can address them.

### The New American Family

Recent data indicate that the American family of today does not look anything like the American family of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1979, 16% of children in the United States lived below the poverty level, with an increase to 20% by 1988 (Hewlett, in Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991). By 1991, 27% of all births were to unwed mothers (Raspberry, 1992). The rate of nonmarital births to adolescent mothers has more than doubled to 64% over the past 25 years (Brooks-Gunn & Chase-Lansdale, 1991). Adolescent mothers also have higher poverty rates, and, of major concern for educators, they have low motivation and expectations and inadequate schooling (Brooks-Gunn & Chase-Lansdale, 1991). Almost 44% of grandmothers across all ethnic groups in the United States provide care for at least one grandchild.

These disturbing data mean that administrators must be prepared to collaborate with a new population of parents who tend to be poorer, frequently of school age themselves, and possibly lacking hope for their future. In many cases, administrators may not even be communicating with the student's natural parent, but with a grandparent, other relative, and/or close family friend. Economic issues and urgencies may override a family member's ability to take time from a job to attend a school conference or other event. The need for administrators to be flexible, creative, and sensitive to families is stronger now than ever before.

## The Heterogeneity of the United States

Isaacs and Benjamin (1991) believe that the 1990s will be known as the years of "the cultural imperative" in the United States because issues relative to culture, ethnicity, and race are present in almost every segment of public policy. National agendas and discussions are calling for a restructuring of our country's institutions, particularly education, to make them more culturally sensitive and culturally competent (Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991).

Although the 1990 Census indicates that the United States remains a majority white country, minority populations are growing at a much faster rate than ever before. For example, in 1990, 9% of the total population was Hispanic and the number of African-American citizens increased 13.2% between 1980 and 1990. The Asian/Pacific Islander population in the United States also increased 107.8% over the decade (Vobejda, 1991). Minorities now make up about one fourth of the U.S. population (Vobejda, 1991). This increase in multicultural diversity is expected to continue. The Children's Defense Fund (1989) has predicted that, by the year 2000, the total number of children from minority groups will increase by 25% and will comprise one third of all children in the United States while non-Hispanic white children will increase by only .2%. By 2020, nearly half of the nation's students will represent minority populations (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). The challenges of adjusting to these changing demographics become even more complex when considering the multiple cultures and languages represented by these population shifts. During the 1990s, more than 5 million children of immigrants are expected to enter U.S. public schools.

## Serving a Diverse Student Population

Educators are finding that traditional, mainstream-culture-dominated approaches are not appropriate for reaching out to students from minority groups and their families. This is most evident in areas where a majority of children being served in school-aged programs are from minority backgrounds. The concept of tailoring an educational program to meet the needs of students with minority group backgrounds is, in many ways, similar to developing an IEP for a student in special education. Many of those same skills can be applied by educators in learning how to relate successfully to families from different cultures.

By exploring the cultures represented by their students, teachers and administrators may be able to better identify strengths, needs, strategies, and solutions. For example, one teacher asked for an evaluation for a 3-year-old Pakistani girl because she never said a word in class and avoided eye contact. The teacher was concerned that the girl's behavior suggested that she was selectively mute. During a home visit, the evaluator observed a vibrant and talkative child. When the mother was asked about the girl's different behaviors at home and school, she explained that "good girls are always quiet and do what they are told when they are in school."

However, there are some subtle differences between individualizing an educational program to meet a student's strengths and needs and tailoring services in a manner that is respectful of a family's culture. With specific minority groups, it is important to learn from family members which aspects of their culture are important to them and how their cultural beliefs and practices will affect the design and delivery of educational services. This approach recognizes the importance of families in the well-being and development of a student. Conversely, it acknowledges that without family involvement and support an educational program is likely to fail, either through passive or active resistance. Passive resistance might be expressed as nonattendance or lack of follow-through with a home program. Active resistance could include refusing services that might ameliorate a disabling condition or prevent secondary disabling conditions from arising.

Some families from other cultures may have a different view of what causes a disability and how it should be treated. Other families may have a mistrust of government services based on their previous experiences in a repressive country and may be wary of approaching educators. If a school division is not respectful of a family's culture or if it is unable to provide services because of a language barrier, the family may be reluctant to obtain appropriate educational services for their child. Lynch and Hanson (1992) identified several things that professionals can do to make services more culturally competent and family centered, especially when developing programs for very young children:

- Learn about the families in the community: (a) Where are they from and when did they arrive? (b) What are the cultural beliefs and practices surrounding child rearing, health and healing, and disability and causation?

- Work with cultural mediators or guides from the families' cultures to learn more about the extent of cultural identification within the community at large, the situational aspects of this identification, and regional variations.

- Learn and use words and forms of greeting in the families' languages if families have limited ability, or are nonproficient in English.

- Allow additional time to work with interpreters to discern families' concerns and priorities and to determine the next steps in the process. Building rapport may take considerable time, but it is a critical element in building effective collaborative partnerships.

- Recognize that some families may be surprised by the extent of family-professional collaboration that is expected in the United States.

  (1) Do not expect every family to be comfortable with a high degree of involvement.

(2) Never assume that a family does not want to be involved. It takes time to build a relationship.

(3) Conversely, do not assume that a family will become involved on its own or will feel comfortable doing so. Try to build a relationship.

- Use as few written forms as possible for families who have limited English skills.

  (1) If forms are used, be sure that they are available in the family's primary language.

  (2) Rely on the interpreter, your observation, and your own instincts and experience to know when to proceed and when to wait for the family to signal readiness to move to the next step.

In summary, the diverse populations that now call the United States home bring with them languages, beliefs, and values that must be respected and honored by administrators and teachers. In many communities, public schools now serve more children who do not have English as their primary language than children who do. It requires time and sensitivity on the part of school administrators and teachers to meaningfully involve and work with families from different cultures. A value-based, family-centered educational program that respects differences and honors choices will be effective for this population of families, and the quality of educational programs and student outcomes will improve.

## 4. WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATING WITH FAMILIES?

This section of the chapter presents strategies, ideas, and guidelines for developing value-based, family-centered education and involving families in their children's education programs.

### Reasons Why Families Are Not Involved

There are many reasons why families may not be involved in their children's school programs. The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) in Alexandria, Virginia, identified several reasons why families are not involved in their children's schools. These reasons are listed in Figure 2. Some of them may not seem like good reasons, but nonetheless, they do keep people away from their children's schools. Additional ideas to help bring families into the school can be found in Appendix A.

## Figure 2

## Reasons Why A Family Member Is Not Involved in the School

- Sees no reason to be involved.
- Is sick.
- Works and cannot leave job.
- Is a single parent.
- Is older parent who has "been there."
- Is burned out or under stress.
- Has little education.
- Is apathetic.
- Is poor.
- Has a child in residential placement.
- Feels inadequate.
- Thinks school people are smarter.
- Has no transportation.
- Does not think school is important.
- Does not understand the child's disability.
- Comes from a different culture.
- Lives in rural area.
- Lives in the inner city.
- Is from a middle class family.
- Is from a upper class family.
- Is depressed.
- Is from a very young family.
- Is too busy.
- Does not speak English.
- Fears the school.
- Is not assertive.
- Feels isolated.
- Does not trust teachers.
- Cannot read or write.
- Thinks the school's job is to educate.
- Has bad memories of his or her own school.

Source: *Adapted from Partnership Series 1: Teachers' Strategies for Involving Hard-to-Reach Families (1991a). Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center.*

## General Principles to Encourage Collaboration

The following suggestions can be used to engage and involve families who may be headed by a single parent, have two parents working full time, be non English-speaking, or be a member of a minority population (Staff, 1992):

- Give families opportunities to visit the school, to use the library, or talk to teachers and administrators when it is convenient for them to do so.
- Increase teachers' awareness of and sensitivity to families' time constraints by announcing meetings far enough in advance to give families time to arrange to attend.
- Arrange and facilitate peer support groups for teenage, single, working, and/or custodial mothers and fathers.
- Provide before-school child care so that working families can see teachers before going to work.
- Conduct evening meetings, with child care, so that working families can attend.
- Establish bilingual hotlines for families who do not speak English.
- Print informational signs in the school in the languages spoken by the families.
- Send messages to families in their primary languages, announcing meetings and suggesting things they can do at home to help with their children's education. Some families may need oral communication because they do not read.
- Establish or support family learning centers in schools, churches, and/or storefronts and offer help to families who want to help their children learn.

## Specific Strategies

Specific strategies that can be used by administrators to involve families in different types of school activities are given in Appendix B. There is not one given set of strategies to use with Family A and one set to use with Family B. These ideas may or may not work with all families. The ideas should be tailored to the unique needs of families. The main thing to keep in mind is that each family is different. Flexibility and creativity to meet each student's unique needs are critical elements of successful collaboration.

Additional strategies for involving families in children's education programs used successfully by educators and administrators in Virginia and other rural areas include the following (Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, 1991a):

- One teacher in Accomack County, Virginia, sends registered letters to tell families of meetings if phone calls tend not to be sufficient. She has found that families pay more attention to registered mail; regular letters are often thrown away unread.

- In some rural areas with rugged terrain, citizens band (CB) radios are used to send messages to families.

- In rural Colorado, before IEP meetings, a school social worker visits families who live long distances from the school. She explains the IEP process and answers questions. She also tells them that she will be at the IEP meeting, and if they have any problems or questions and want her to intervene for them, she will.

- In Pendelton, West Virginia, a teacher-parent team visits individual families before their child is evaluated. They inform the families about the special education cycle and assist them throughout the process.

- In some Head Start programs, transportation and child care are provided for all families attending workshops or meetings.

- One school has established a Principal's Hotline 1 hour each week. Families may call the principal about any issue. Calls are limited to 5 minutes each.

- One school district locates and calls the family-to-family networks in the community to seek assistance in involving more families.

- Some schools feature a day for the men in the lives of young children. Special class activities are planned to honor the fathers, grandfathers, and others.

These are just a sampling of ideas to use to involve families who traditionally may be reluctant to enter the school. Administrators are encouraged to seek out and share successful collaboration ideas with colleagues.

**Strategies for Improving Meeting and Conference Outcomes**

This section contains ideas for setting a collaborative, cooperative atmosphere when administrators and teachers schedule and conduct conferences with families. There are also some ideas that administrators and teachers can share with families before, during, and/or after conferences. Appendix C is a useful handout for administrators to share with families regarding their role in effective collaboration.

### Setting the Tone for Meetings and Conferences

Meetings between schools and families are opportunities to build long-lasting, collaborative partnerships, if certain elements such as those laid out in Appendix C are present. First, the environment for a meeting should be welcoming. Second, the opening of the meeting should focus on the strengths and positive aspects of the child. Third, there should be time for the family to outline its concerns. Fourth, the discussion should be organized, with a purpose and outcomes.

Some specific steps that can be taken to help make meetings and conferences as positive as possible include the following:

1. Arrange the space and time.
    - Use adult-size chairs that are comfortable.
    - Make sure there are no barriers blocking the line of vision between the school staff and the family.
    - Meet in an area that is clutter-free, with few distractions.
    - Arrange to have no interruptions during the scheduled meeting time. If there is an emergency interruption, tell the family members they can have more time or reschedule them for another time.
2. Open the meeting with a positive topic to "break the ice."
    - Compliment the student's strengths and capabilities.
    - Tell an amusing story about something the student might have said or done recently.
    - Discuss the weather, current events, or something else totally unrelated to school.
3. Be prepared to let the family members start the conference discussion if they seem eager to discuss their agenda.
    - Listen carefully to what is and is not being said.
    - Ask clarification questions.

- Reinforce the family's comments when appropriate.
- Let the family members finish, without interrupting them when there is disagreement with what is said; address the point when it is your turn to speak.

4. Outline, briefly and concisely, the points the school wants to cover.
    - Have necessary papers and documents at hand.
    - Have copies of the current IEP.
    - Include any of the family's concerns identified in Step 3.
5. Develop an action plan, setting specific goals with the family.
    - Lay out action steps.
    - List responsibilities and who is to do what.
    - Establish a timeline.
    - Set the time of the next meeting, phone call, or information exchange. (Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, 1991b. Revised with permission.)

Collaborating by Telephone

For a variety of reasons, it is often necessary to communicate with families by telephone rather than in face-to-face meetings. Rarely should the phone be relied upon as the sole means of collaborating and communicating. There are few substitutes for face-to-face meetings for building sound relationships. However, when necessary, phone collaboration can be a productive way of reaching out to families if basic collaboration techniques are kept in mind (Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, 1991b). See Appendix D for additional strategies for communicating with families.

Collaborating in Writing

Teachers and administrators may like to use informal written messages to families as a way of reporting a child's progress, informing them of homework, and/or providing positive reinforcements (Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, 1991b). Some of the information that can be conveyed to families in this way includes the following:

- Skills mastered.
- Skills now being learned.
- Ideas for home activities to reinforce skills.
- Form for the family to return to school indicating

  (1) What the child does at home.
  (2) Suggestions for activities.
  (3) Pertinent information.

If this form of communication and collaboration is used, remember to

- Involve families in making the decision to use this type of communication and in designing the format for it.
- Keep a record of what is sent home.
- Plan for regular phone or in-person meetings for feedback.
- Make sure the messages sent

  (1) Are clear and concise.
  (2) Have a simple format.
  (3) Are friendly and collaborative in nature.
  (4) Are easily recognizable (by using colored paper, one child's drawings, or a colored folder).

**Parent Resource Centers**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has established a Parent Resource Center Project to give local school systems support in establishing their own parent resource centers. This project evolved from the need to train both parents and educators in the skills they need for creating and implementing effective, collaborative working relationships. It is the goal of the VDOE to make the services of Parent Resource Centers available to *all* of Virginia's families of children with disabilities. Each local center is staffed by a parent of a child with a disability and an educator. The center's functions and responsibilities include the following:

- Providing a basic training workshop, *Understanding Special Education*, to help families understand special education and their role in cooperative planning.

- Providing up-to-date information and resources for families and professionals.

- Helping families resolve concerns and make decisions regarding their children's education.

- Offering workshops and training on topics requested by families.

- Offering inservice training workshops, *The Partnership Series*, to educators.

- Facilitating interagency collaboration with major agency and advocacy organizations serving exceptional children and their families.

Although all centers provide the services just listed, each center is different and designed to meet the unique needs of the local community. Examples of other types of activities and services that may be provided are

- Surrogate parent training.

- Family support groups.

- Lending library for families and educators.

- Preschool screening/child find.

- Interagency councils and committees.

- Liaison to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

A complete list of parent resource centers in Virginia can be obtained by contacting

*Judy Hudgins, Educator*
*Anita Swan, Parent*
*Virginia Department of Education*
*P.O. Box 2120*
*Richmond, VA 23216-2120*
*1-800/422-2083*

## SUMMARY

This chapter has provided information about values-based, family-centered strategies that will involve all families and improve educational programs and student outcomes. The tone is meant to be supportive of both school and home. Both sides have rights; both sides have responsibilities. Neither side is right all the time; neither side is wrong all the time (Martin, 1991).

The ideas and strategies presented here are designed to encourage respect for others' values, rights, and beliefs. In addition, they are intended to encourage creative thinking about how schools address the strengths and needs of, as well as the differences among, all populations of students. The strategies and suggestions are intended to develop positive, collaborative relationships between families and schools and to prevent conflicts. If conflicts do arise, resources such as *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, by Roger Fisher and William Ury, may be helpful.

Families whose children are in special education programs have carefully defined rights under IDEA. Schools must accept students and involve their families. Providing students with disabilities with a high quality educational program that is collaboratively designed by home and school meets the spirit of the law. When the spirit of IDEA is carried out in every local school building, there will be values-based, family-centered state-of-the-art programs in place. Improvement in educational programs and student outcomes will follow.

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# APPENDIX A

## Improving School-Family Interactions: What Schools Can Do

# IMPROVING SCHOOL-FAMILY INTERACTIONS: WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

| | |
|---|---|
| Send early notification of meetings, giving choices for dates/times/places.<br>•Flexible hours and places.<br>•At least two weeks notice. | Set realistic time limits; plan an agenda and allot time to each item. |
| Make notices friendly and nonthreatening. | Establish priorities; extend time or increase the number of meetings if time runs short. |
| Notify the family as soon as a student has a problem; do not wait to announce it at a conference. | Improve your communication skills in:<br>•listening.<br>•giving feedback.<br>•resolving conflicts. |
| Get to know the families through open houses, back-to-school night, PTA events, sports, etc; communicate in informal ways. | Learn from families; Acknowledge the family's expertise about the child's interests, behaviors, history, preferences; gain this information before a meeting by calling the family if necessary. |
| Plan a comfortable physical environment; ask whether the family would like you to come to their home to put them at ease; have snacks available. | Accept families as advocates; do not take a family's intense desire to make things better for its child as single-mindedness or belligerence. |
| Have documents, etc. ready before the meeting occurs; give copies to the family prior to meeting, if possible, so they are prepared. | Avoid using jargon; use clear language. |
| Build the family's confidence in you by finding something special about the student. | Establish rapport and a collaborative spirit through a good conference. |

*Source: Adapted from Partnership Series 1: Teachers' Strategies for Involving Hard-to-Reach Families. Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center. (1991a).*

# Appendix B

## Strategies for Involving Families

## Strategies for Involving Families

| Reason Not Involved | Possible Approaches | Activities/Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Works long hours; is busy;<br>has too much stress. | Let the person know that you know she or he is working, very busy, or under stress. | Arrange for regular contacts: phone calls and/or written messages. |
| | Emphasize the importance of her or his input and observations in the school. | Start to schedule in September a variety of ways in which families can help in the classroom for a half day:<br>•field trips.<br>•art projects.<br>•cooking projects.<br>•lunch at school.<br>Let the family select the activity and schedule it at their convenience, within reason. |
| | Discuss the value of close school-home follow-through, encouragement, and reinforcement (not homework supervision!). | |
| | Point out that short, but ongoing, contacts between home and school mean better student outcomes. | |
| | Ask what the family needs the school to do to make involvement easier. | |

| Reason Not Involved | Possible Approaches | Activities/Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Overwhelmed by life's events and family crises. | Set the goal of getting your foot in the door; visit the home with someone who is already reaching out to the family. | Link the family with another one that is positive and upbeat. |
| | Build the family's self-esteem by acknowledging the student's positive qualities and accomplishments. | Schedule a preliminary meeting with the family before any formal conferences to make sure they are ready and understand the purpose of the conference/ meeting. |
| | Make the family aware of how much they know about their child and the valuable resource they can be to school. | Send home photos and scrapbooks of school events. |
| | Let the family know that you like their child. | Extend a special invitation to visit the school for a pleasurable activity. |
| | Identify hobbies and skills that might be shared with other students. | Provide linkage with other social services. |
| | Structure a series of small successes the family can achieve. | |

| Reason Not Involved | Possible Approaches | Activities/Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Cultural differences. | Learn about family life and traditions from school staff and people from other agencies who are familiar with the culture. | Have special days for learning about the culture's history, foods, and customs, and ask the family to assist with them. |
| | Identify a key person from the culture to facilitate communication between the school and home:<br>•older sibling.<br>•relative.<br>•church member.<br>•community agency staff.<br>•neighbor. | Make home visits if culturally appropriate. |
| | Select one aspect of home-school relations to work on at a time. | Have a key person from the PTA or another family routinely call and explain special activities, when they will be, and whether a ride is needed. |
| | Reinforce, often and in a variety of ways, the importance of the family's role in the student's education. | Translate school notices and information. |
| | Accept diverse approaches to family involvement. | Refer the family to parent resource center. |
| | Ask for help in structuring the child's school program to match his or her homelife, such as learning key words and phrases used at home and understood by the child. | |

| Reason Not Involved | Possible Approaches | Activities/Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Fear and distrust of the school system. | Talk with other school personnel to see what approaches have been tried. | Have first contacts be of a nonschool, nonproblematic nature; focus on building a positive relationship. |
| | Identify someone in the community whom the family trusts and ask to make a home visit with that person. | Plan a social meeting with food and children's activities. |
| | Make sure communication with the home is clear, friendly, honest, and short; do not use educational jargon. | Ask another family to call and provide transportation. |
| | Expect to be rebuffed but continue friendly persuasion. | Provide baby sitting for the meeting. |
| | Send positive notes about the child, and make frequent phone calls as well. | Talk with the parent resource center regarding ways to reach the family. |
| | Avoid becoming defensive if the family expresses angry or hostile feelings. | |
| | Help the family focus on the future and positive aspects and goals of the child's education. | |
| | Let the family know how much the child is enjoyed; stress how the family can help the school meet goals for the child. | |

| Reason Not Involved | Possible Approaches | Activities/Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Burned out; discouraged. | Schedule a one-on-one meeting early in the year; ask questions to find reasons for burnout; explore past school experiences; emphasize the student's strengths and positive aspects of the program. | Send home positive notes on a regular basis. |
| | Emphasize the student's accomplishments and how much progress she or he has made; ask if the person would help another family who is not involved. | Provide information about support groups, respite care, and family-to-family groups, and/or refer the person to the parent resource center. |
| | Promote a new strategy or approach to the involvement, depending and building on past experiences. | Organize a "buddy" system, pairing families who will complement each other for school activities. |
| | Ask for specific involvement, clearly outlining the steps, what is needed, and why it is needed in order to avoid overwhelming the person. | Ask the person to share a hobby or special skill with students in one or several classes. |

*Source: Adapted from: Partnership Series 1: Teachers' Strategies for Involving Hard-to-Reach Families (1991a). Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center.*

# APPENDIX C

## Ways Families Can Improve Communication with the School

## Ways Families Can Improve Communication with the School

1. Get involved in school activities such as PTA, sports, back-to-school night, and other informal events. Get to know the people there so that you are comfortable when you come for a conference.

2. Nip a problem or concern in the bud. Problems are easier to solve when taken care of early.

3. Be prepared for meetings and conferences. Bring records and documents. Make a list of questions and concerns. Get to the meeting place early so that you are not rushed and under undue stress.

4. Approach school staff with a clear definition of the problem or issue. Have an open mind. Avoid dwelling on one fixed solution. Be willing to engage in problem solving.

5. Make a list of what you want to talk about, starting with the most important thing first. Ask for additional time if you are running too long. Do not agree to a course of action for the sake of saving time.

6. Avoid assigning blame. Do not blame yourself for your child's problems at school. Do not blame the teacher. Do not blame the child. Blaming is not productive.

7. Acknowledge role differences. You are there just to advocate for *your* child. The school staff is there for *all* the children.

8. Treat school staff as allies. Do not view them as your enemy before knowing them. This makes it difficult to make important decisions with a clear mind. Assume that school staff can be effective, collaborative allies, working with you to improve outcomes for your child.

*Source: Adapted from Partnership Series 1: Teachers' Strategies for Involving Hard-to-Reach Families (1991a). Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center.*

# APPENDIX D

## Bridges and Barriers to School-Home Communication

# BRIDGES AND BARRIERS TO SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION

| BRIDGES | BARRIERS |
|---|---|
| Be interested, not impressive; promote the family's confidence in their own authority. | Appear to be the authority. |
| Listen so that you are completely clear about the family's concern(s); not getting their message will "come back to haunt you." | Avoid the issue or patronize and pay lip service to the family's concern(s). |
| Get enough information; find out what has been tried before; ask advice of others. | Make snap recommendations based on emotions. |
| Wait and form your own opinions; observe behaviors. | Form opinions based on stereotypes, rumors, etc. |
| Focus discussion on factors you can control. | Make excuses and blame factors you cannot control. |
| Keep in mind that the family is usually concerned or upset about an issue that has nothing to do with you personally. | Assume the family's concern is directed at you or your job performance. |
| Give the family at least two thirds of the time allotted to the meeting. | Talk too much and control the discussion. |
| Respond with statements and questions. | Ask questions that intimidate the family. |
| Be sensitive to the language levels, vocabularies, and background of the family; adjust your language, but be yourself. | Use educational jargon; be patronizing and condescending. |

*Source: Adapted from Partnership Series 10: Trading Places: Improving Understanding Between Parents and Teachers (1991b). Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center.*

| BRIDGES | BARRIERS |
|---|---|
| Be open to new approaches, then clarify your position, based on past experiences and observations. | Be dogmatic; use simplistic statements. |
| Ask the family in what area they want suggestions:<br>•Keep suggestions limited.<br>•Give just a few to see whether they are followed.<br>•Ask questions that lead the family to develop their own problem-solving skills. | Give too many suggestions. |
| Let the family know good times to contact you. | Limit accessibility to families. |
| Schedule discussion times, allowing ample time to reach a resolution. | Take on a tough problem, with too little time for discussion. |
| Pinpoint and follow through on all things promised by the school. | Fail to follow through on promises. |
| Admit openly when you are wrong; accept your share of the problem. | Avoid admitting you made a mistake. |
| Encourage the family to take up a problem with another staff member or person directly, not with you; focus on working together to improve outcomes for the student. | Talk about problems with another staff member when the person is not there. |
| Wait until the family asks for help or until a good relationship is established before suggesting a counselor or support service. | Suggest counseling before establishing a relationship built on trust. |
| Be natural and relaxed and use good listening and communication skills. | Act like a psychologist; overuse reflective listening. |

*Source: Adapted from Partnership Series 10: Trading Places: Improving Understanding Between Parents and Teachers (1991b). Parent Educational Advocacy and Training Center.*

# *Program Development and Evaluation*

## Chapter 5

# Individualized Education Programs for Students with Disabilities: How Do We Move Beyond Compliance?

*Stephen W. Smith and William Slattery*

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about procedural compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Adherence to the mandates of the law (formally known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142), particularly with regard to the individualized education program (IEP) has been a major focus. During the initial years of the law's implementation, IEP developers were concerned with procedural qualification. Do IEPs incorporate the provisions mandated by IDEA? Do IEPs have procedural integrity?

Although the law provides a definition of what constitutes an IEP, the original intent was to provide an instrument for teachers, parents, and students that could facilitate high quality education based on individual needs. The problem is not how to best fill out an IEP but rather how to develop a program that is unique to each student who has special needs. Planning and implementing a procedurally sound IEP will always be a challenge, but the developers of IEPs must transcend the public mandate and deliver a high quality IEP that is both a procedural document and a framework for specially designed instruction.

This chapter provides guidance to principals, supervisors, and directors of special education as they develop and implement high quality programs for children and youth with disabilities. The following information is provided to enhance programming, not to dictate policy. The chapter is structured around the following questions frequently asked by administrators about IEP programming:

1. **What is an IEP?**

2. **Conceptually, is the IEP a process or a product?**

3. **Who is involved in IEP development and implementation?**

4 **How can parents/advocates become more involved in the IEP process?**

5. **What are best practices in IEP development and implementation?**

6. **What is the role of computer-assisted IEPs?**

## 1. WHAT IS AN IEP?

The IEP is both a document and a process whereby educational services are prescribed and recorded for the individual student. It was the intent of Congress that the education of students with disabilities would be specially designed and stated as a written plan with annual reviews of progress. As such, a legal definition of the IEP is necessary as a starting point for this chapter.

### Legal Requirements

The policy of providing an appropriate education [Sec. 1400(c)] is achieved principally by the device of the individualized education program (IEP) [Sec. 1401(19)]: "The term individualized education program means a written statement for each child with a disability developed in any meeting by a representative of the local education agency or an intermediate educational unit who shall be qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, the teacher, the parents or guardian of such child, and whenever appropriate, such child, which statement shall include:

- A statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child;
- A statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives;
- A statement of the specific educational and related services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which such child will be able to participate in general educational programs;
- The projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of such services;
- Appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved; and,
- A statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than 16 and annually thereafter (and, when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age 14 or younger) including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting."

### Present Levels of Educational Performance

The IEP should contain information that indicates not only what the child cannot do but also what skills the child possesses. In that way, the IEP will contain information relevant for program planning that is built on the child's known weaknesses as well as his or her strengths. The present level of performance (PLP) statement will contain information obtained from norm or criterion-referenced tests. According to Strickland and Turnbull (1990) the PLP should be:

- "Relevant and directly related to other components of the IEP.
- Stated in terms of strengths and weaknesses.
- Accurate in describing the adverse effect of the disability on educational performance.
- Current at the time of IEP development.
- Written in clear concise language (p. 211)"

### Annual Goals and Short-Term Instructional Objectives

Based on the PLP information, annual goals and objectives are developed. These constitute the curriculum that is specially designed for a student receiving special education programming. An annual goal is a statement of a skill or task a child should be able to learn over the next year. Goals should be written to address the weaknesses noted in the PLP statement, and when considered necessary by the IEP team, to maintain the child's areas of strength. In order to achieve annual goals, a prescribed sequence of instruction, or short-term objectives, should be outlined.

### Specific Educational and Related Services and Extent of Participation in General Educational Programs

Educational services and related services should be specific to each child and based on the information and educational program outlined in the IEP. Examples of educational services include special class or resource room placement, programs for students with learning disabilities or those who are classified as educable mentally disabled, speech therapy, or programs for students with hearing impairments. Related services necessary for the student to benefit from the educational services provided in the IEP are determined by the IEP committee. The number of related services will depend on the specific needs of the child. Examples of related services include physical therapy, psychological services, transportation, and/or social work services. Appendix A contains a more detailed list of related services in special education.

Each child's IEP should also contain the amount of time that will be spent in general education. This information may be the percentage of instructional and/or social time or the number of daily or weekly hours spent in the general education classroom.

### Initiation and Anticipated Duration

The IEP committee should record the projected date that special education and related services will begin and the duration of services. In most cases, the duration is one year, because the IEP documents a 12-month program.

### Appropriate Objective Criteria and Evaluation Procedures

Evaluation of goals and objectives is necessary to monitor the appropriateness of the IEP. By documenting and subsequently monitoring a student's progress, the IEP committee can make decisions relative to potential program changes. Objective criteria and evaluation procedures describe how and when the school will measure progress on the short-term objectives. The criteria should indicate how much and how often the child must demonstrate the skill or task. The procedures used to measure student progress might include a test (teacher-made or other) or an observation. After using the evaluation criteria and procedures, teachers and parents should know whether the child has been successful at completing the short-term objectives.

### Needed Transition Services

The IEP should include annual goals and short-term objectives regarding transition services and necessary interagency linkages for a child receiving special education services. For more substantive information regarding the documentation of transition services for children and youth with disabilities in the IEP, see Chapter 10. To facilitate completion of an IEP document that is in compliance with the law, see Appendix B.

## 2. CONCEPTUALLY, IS THE IEP A PROCESS OR A PRODUCT?

As previously mentioned, IDEA directs specific attention toward the development and documentation of appropriate educational programming through the IEP. For example, issues regarding assessment, the student's current academic functioning, the student's identified needs, and special education services and related services available to the student are specified in the IEP document. The IEP can be viewed both as representing the outcome or product of the referral process and as a legal document representing the major part of the service and delivery process.

### The IEP as a Product

The IEP is often perceived as a document that is prepared by individuals who are not involved in the daily learning activities of the child. Similarly, the IEP is sometimes viewed as unnecessary paperwork that must be completed by the special education teacher who is mostly responsible for its development. The general education teacher often feels that since IEP goals and objectives are only for the special education teacher, they have no relevance for day-to-day general education. Finally, people often perceive the IEP as involving persons whose specific job is the evaluation of children, rather than seeing it from a more ecological viewpoint as the gathering of information. The following difficulties can be encountered when the IEP is viewed solely as a product:

- General education teachers complain about having special education students in their classes. They feel untrained to handle the special needs of these students.
- Special education teachers complain about the lack of cooperation from the general education teachers, particularly in facilitating mainstreaming of students with special needs.
- The input of specialists is often discounted as being too unrealistic for implementation in the general education classroom.
- Parents often express concerns about the mainstreaming of their children into general education classes and the services they may require to be successful in this placement.
- There is a need to ensure that the activities in the classroom match the stated goals in the IEP.
- A common complaint is that it takes too much time to complete the IEP process.

A checklist for documenting the appropriateness of the IEP is included in Appendix C.

**The IEP as a Process**

One way to correct the problems inherent in viewing the IEP primarily as a document is to see it as an ongoing, developmental process. The goal of this approach is to deliver a comprehensive, free, and appropriate education with the involvement of many participants. The following are benefits of conceptualizing the IEP as a process:

- Viewing the IEP as a process focuses on the participants' varied roles from the different perspectives which are needed for an accurate and relevant description of the child's strengths and weaknesses in many different settings, including the current educational setting, i.e. ecological assessment.

- Seeing the IEP as a process rather than a product allows for ethical compliance and discussion of the intent of the law, as opposed to seeing the IEP as representing compliance with the letter of the law.

- Conceptualizing the IEP as a process allows for the shared responsibility of educating children with disabilities among all involved professionals.

- With shared responsibility for educating children with disabilities, it is more likely that general and special education daily programming will include the identified goals of the IEP.

- The number of professionals available to deliver the needed support and guidance will be enhanced due to increased participation.

- The increased participation in the IEP process will assist in involving children with disabilities in the school's activities.

In addition to these benefits, approaching the IEP as a process also provides

- Improved programming for all students, not just those in special education.

- Increased participation of the involved professionals as a decision-making team, providing essential and relevant information, evaluating data provided by other professionals, and cooperating as team members.

- Expanded knowledge and awareness of the involved professionals and a more complete view of the services and expertise available. This knowledge will help to improve the effectiveness of the services available to all children.

## 3. WHO IS INVOLVED IN IEP DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION?

There are specific guidelines in IDEA as to IEP committee membership. The law requires that the IEP committee consist of the following individuals:

- The student's teacher (special and/or general education).

- A school professional -- other than the child's teacher -- who is qualified to provide or supervise special education.

- The person conducting the student's evaluation or a person knowledgeable in the interpretation of evaluation data (if the student is being considered for special education placement for the first time).

- The student's parents or guardian.

It should be noted that IDEA does not mandate that the parents take an active participation in their child's special education programming. Rather, the law stipulates that the public agency take steps to ensure parents' attendance at IEP meetings or that parents are afforded the opportunity to participate. If the parents are not able to attend, the public agency should use other methods to include parents in the process, such as individual telephone or conference calls. If the parents refuse to take part in the IEP meeting, the agency must record its attempts to accommodate them through detailed records of phone calls, copies of correspondence, and records of home or work site visits.

Other persons who may be involved in IEP development and attend the IEP meeting are

- The student, when appropriate.
- Other individuals such as the speech/language therapist, parent/child advocate, physical and/or occupational therapist, and social worker, at the discretion of the parent or agency.

## 4. HOW CAN PARENTS/ADVOCATES BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THE IEP PROCESS?

Parents play a number of important roles in their relationship with a school system. In addition to being advocates for their child, parents/advocates are often care providers, members of civic, professional and political groups, and recipients and facilitators of professional decisions. An additional role for parents/advocates is that of educational decision maker when they are made part of the IEP process. Provisions of IDEA mandate that schools provide an opportunity for active parental participation in the education of children with disabilities.

Involving parents as colleagues in the IEP process will assist in the development and implementation of a comprehensive program that aids in their child's integration into the general education program. Typical parental concerns about integration include questions of safety, attitudes of general education teachers toward students in special education, program quality, transportation, and the potential for failure.

To help parents and advocates actively participate in the IEP process, the focus should be on the development of a comprehensive program in which the goals and objectives are relevant and acceptable to parents, general education teachers, and special education teachers. Active participation assumes that the parental role as educational decision maker is one that is supported by the school system and will lead to closer communication between home and school.

### Preconference Preparations

It may be difficult to get parents actively involved in their child's educational program. When parents do not participate in educational decisions, educators may interpret their lack of involvement in a number of ways. Educators may believe that the parents are satisfied with the decisions being made for their child and do not see the need for further participation. They may also believe that the parents are apathetic about their involvement in the IEP process or that they do not have enough information about their child's functioning and the nature of the decisions to be made to allow them to participate.

Prior to the IEP conference, barriers such as communication problems, lack of understanding of the school system, parental feelings of inferiority, lack of knowledge of how to help their child, and logistical problems may preclude active participation by parents. However, some measures can be taken to increase the likelihood of parent participation in the IEP process. Educators can supply parents with local and state information that will explain the IEP process and answer their questions in a parent-friendly manner. In Virginia, the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center has materials and a training program especially designed for parents.

### The IEP Conference

When parents do attend the IEP meeting, it is important for them to be aware of the IEP process and to have their questions answered. It is also helpful to determine whether the family has an advocate they wish to bring with them to this meeting. During the conference, it is important to

- Avoid overwhelming the parents with a large number of professionals.
- Include a parent advocate.
- Emphasize that the parents possess valuable information about the child that is important in helping teachers and others understand the whole child.
- View the parents as partners in the process.
- Avoid using jargon, and explain important terms and abbreviations.
- Summarize findings and decisions.

### Postconference Follow Up

Specific attention should be given to parents after the IEP meeting. By maintaining contact, school professionals promote further communication with parents and increase the likelihood that they will perceive school district personnel as allies in the educational process. Specifically, the postconference contact can be an opportunity to review with parents the results of the IEP conference and offer suggestions, if appropriate, for future meetings. Since IEP meetings are individual in nature, suggestions for postconference contact are not readily available. However, there are a number of questions that school personnel can use to guide their postconference contact with parents. Specifically:

- Are all of the parents' questions answered?
- Are the parents comfortable with their level of involvement in the IEP process?
- If the parents indicate willingness, what feasible and effective techniques or procedures pertaining to the IEP goals and objectives could be supplemented at home?

More specific and detailed suggestions for involving parents in the IEP conference are included in Appendix D. Suggestions are also made for helping parents in the determination of placement and related services and for concluding the conference.

## 5. WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES IN IEP DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION?

Many teachers consider the IEP an obsolete and cumbersome tool that has no direct bearing on educational quality. These individuals consider themselves good teachers (a perception shared by colleagues) and thus subscribe to the notion that a "good IEP" and effective education are mutually exclusive (Dudley-Marling, 1985; Morgan & Rhode, 1983).

Past analyses of IEPs, however, have not investigated the matching of the IEP and actual classroom instruction, although instruction as designed and managed by the IEP should have direct implications for instruction (Smith, 1990a). The law clearly states that a connection should exist between the IEP and classroom activities. This connection is the theme that is common to the following characteristics of best practices.

### Internal Congruence

An underlying assumption regarding IEPs is that each student's present level of performance is to serve as the basis for IEP annual goals and objectives. This basic link between student need and instructional program represents the very essence of specially designed instruction. Results from research, however, do not support this assumption (Fiedler & Knight, 1986; Smith & Simpson, 1989). In the absence of any delineated guidelines, every effort should be made to ensure that the IEP's annual goals and short-term objectives directly relate to the Present Level of Performance statement. In this way, annual goals and objectives are based on assessment and not generated by professionals who are simply tailoring a program they believe to be beneficial to the student regardless of diagnostic findings.

### External Congruence

Not only should the IEP be valid internally (i.e., have congruence between level of performance and annual goals), it should also have direct implications for instructional activities presented in the classroom. The law's intent was that the IEP be used to guide, manage, and orchestrate instructional programming for children with disabilities. As such, the IEP should be the blueprint from which teachers derive daily, weekly, and monthly lesson plans and units to best serve the student's unique needs. Some researchers, however, speculate that the IEP has little relevance to classroom instruction because teachers do not use its evaluative component (i.e., evaluation of the progress of short-term objectives) to its fullest extent (Smith, 1990b; Smith & Simpson, 1989). The opportunity for teachers to use the IEP as a blueprint from which to generate a specific instructional program for a student is enhanced if the IEP committee insists that the document

- Be internally valid, with congruence between assessment and annual goals.
- Serve as a guide for placement, related services, and instructional programming.
- Serve as the blueprint for specific instructional programming.
- Set the framework for the general direction for working with the student.

### Present Levels of Performance

When determining the present levels of a student's functioning, best practices consist of using curriculum-based, norm-referenced, and ecological assessment (Shapiro & Skinner, 1990). Using these types of assessment to obtain educational, psychological, and other information such as medical, social-emotional, historical, and observational data, aids professionals in developing an educational program that reflects a student's unique strengths and needs. Using various assessment methods to gather student data across time, setting, and situations provides a global and accurate view of the student's day-to-day functioning. When described in a narrative form, the student's functioning is rich and detailed and the goals for the student's program are more apparent. When goals are apparent, internal congruence can be achieved.

Functioning as Measured by Curriculum-Based Assessment

Determining a student's needs based on day-to-day performance within the existing curriculum as a means of providing effective and efficient instruction is the basis for curriculum-based assessment. A teacher's use of curriculum-based assessment requires an understanding of the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Requisite to that understanding is the teacher's ongoing planning and proper use of curriculum materials. Rosenfield and Kuralt (1990) have suggested that the following questions be made central to the teacher's curriculum-based assessment practices and the subsequent educational decision-making process:

- What is the specific understanding that the teacher wants to develop from the instructional task?
- Is there a discrepancy between the outcomes expected by the teacher and those the student has achieved?
- If there is an instructional mismatch, what prerequisites are necessary for the student to attain the desired outcome?
- In the instruction, does each task match the student's entry-level skills?
- Is the instruction presented in such a way that the learning is efficient?

In conducting curriculum-based assessment, the following steps should be followed:

- Assess the student's performance in a curriculum task.
- Compare the student's entry level to the demands of the instructional task and determine the degree of variance.
- Adjust the task so that it is commensurate with the student's instructional level and rate of learning.
- Monitor the student's performance and measure the progress.

Functioning as Measured by Norm-Referenced Assessment

In the determination of a child's present level of performance, information from a norm-referenced achievement test or a criterion-referenced test can be cited in the IEP as being reflective of the child's current functioning. Level of performance is measured using one or more of the following preferred practices:

- Testing the child with published, norm-referenced achievement devices.

- Using tests that are tied to national or regional norms.

- Testing prior to instruction as the basis for identifying instructional planning that will result in effective interventions.

Typically, however, assessment consists of practices that may be problematic, such as

- Assessing students with published achievement tests that are insensitive to student growth.

- Using tests that have only one form.

- Summarizing student performance in inappropriate terms, such as grade equivalents, or in terms that do not reflect student improvement.

Preferred practices should focus on multimethod assessments such as including classroom work samples, assessing a student's skill and motivation, and describing the instruction and curriculum used. In using test data, the assessment instrument must be reliable and valid and should use production-type responses -- that is, having students produce their own responses to test items rather than choosing from predetermined responses as in multiple-choice items. By assessing in this manner, the teacher can gather information that will identify a child's ineffective problem-solving strategies and skills.

A child's assessment should also be compared to the norms of the local population to operationalize expectations within districts and buildings and facilitate decision making. Interventions should be evaluated by frequently sampling knowledge and skills gained from the curriculum. Most important, the tests and evaluation information used should be sensitive to change, and the data obtained by the testing should be in a form that parents and teachers can interpret when norm-referenced decisions are made.

### Functioning as Measured by Ecological Assessment

A preferred practice of assessment should include information from a variety of settings and a variety of tasks. Bardon (1988) stated that more attention needs to be given to instruction, school curriculum, and what takes place in the learning environment. Bardon concluded that the focus should not be on pathology but on educability, and that local norms and individualized tailoring of assessment to educational functioning are necessary.

When it is guided by Bardon's conceptualization of a total assessment of the present level of performance, evaluation goes beyond the strict requirements of IDEA, in that it focuses on the student's day-to-day performance. Narrative summaries of the student's overall functioning can include medical, social-emotional, and observational data relative to day-to-day performance.

This information can be collected using (a) frequency counts of behavior; (b) time sampling of social or academic behaviors; (c) medical/social-emotional histories; (d) checklists and rating scales; and (e) anecdotal records of the teacher and/or parent.

It is of vital importance to view the functioning of the child in many different settings (e.g., large and small groups, in school and out of school, engaged in academic tasks, and at play). This individualized assessment yields data on the child's social, academic, and physical needs. Teachers typically gather and use this data in their day-to-day instruction. The formal inclusion of this information is important in the formative evaluation of the child's progress.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives are related statements of what the student is expected to achieve. Smith and Simpson (1989) reported procedural faults in more than half of the 214 IEPs of students with behavioral disorders they investigated. These errors included a low number of behavioral goals, few objectives met, and little congruence between the performance statements and the annual goals. Since relevant goals and objectives are important components in the determination of exit criteria from the special education program, determining the extent to which these objectives have been met is vital in deciding whether or not to mainstream a student.

The annual goals should link the intervention with assessment. That is, the student's needs should be evident from the assessment results, and educational goals should address these needs. The IEP should contain goals and objectives for all areas in which the student cannot substantially benefit from the general education program, including related services to be provided to the student. Tymitz (1980) suggested as a recommended standard an average of four short-term objectives for each of four to ten annual goals.

The development of goals and objectives should be viewed as an ongoing process whereby the goals and objectives are modified as the student continues to demonstrate mastery. The attainment of the stated objectives is measured by daily performance, as determined by the teacher, and frequent measures of the skills needed to attain the goal. The criterion should be of a type and level appropriate to the behavior being learned. If the objectives subordinate to a goal are sequenced by a task analysis, the competency standard should be the level of the skill needed to address the next objective.

## 6. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED IEPS?

Computers are useful for accomplishing both simple and complex tasks in education. Computer software, both school district generated and commercial, offers many sophisticated ways to aid in the cost effectiveness, speed, and general ease of developing IEPs. As the role of classroom teachers and other school professionals becomes more demanding and complex, the computer is a useful tool to ease the burden of paperwork and program development by aiding in IEP development.

### Available Technology

Available local, state, or commercial computer software designed to assist in IEP development often consists of multiple text files, a bank of goals and objectives, and/or an accompanying manual from which to select and print goals and objectives. The bank of goals and objectives covers various academic areas such as reading, mathematics, and social studies, as well as nonacademic areas such as emotional and behavioral control, leisure time skills, and adaptive behavior. Such software systems typically consist of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of ready-to-print goals and objectives. Additionally, some programs offer options for practitioners to create goals and objectives. A printed copy of the IEP can be readily completed by entering demographic information, present levels of performance data, and other required IEP components, and selecting annual goals and short-term objectives from a bank or accompanying manual. Commercial IEP software companies also advertise their ability to customize the IEP format to meet district specifications (e.g., non-English versions of the IEP), and they can include the provision of administrative consulting and on-site staff training.

### Implications for State and Local Education Agencies

For professionals charged with the delivery of an appropriate education, development of IEPs through computer assistance has programmatic and legal implications. On a programmatic level, the IEP is essential in documenting the provision of "specially designed instruction" for students in special education. Yet, developing IEPs through computer assistance without regard to substantive quality concerns raises questions as to how personalized they are. With this in mind, if computer-assisted IEPs are found to be questionable in fulfilling the intent of the law, then special education (i.e., "specially designed instruction") as documented in the IEP may also be questionable. For example, the educational program outlined in a computer-assisted IEP will no longer be "special" if the standard of individualization is no longer satisfied. In fact, it is possible to foresee a situation in which respective classes of students (e.g., a particular disability group or grade or age level) may end up with the same standardized IEP. If the proposed educational program is not individualized or special, then it cannot satisfy even minimal standards of what constitutes an appropriate education.

Besides programmatic issues, supervisory personnel in state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) should be cognizant of potential legal problems involved when implementing computer-assisted IEPs. Fundamentally, "IEPs are the essential audit track for litigation" (Clune & Van Pelt, 1985, p. 29). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and at least one state level review officer have commented on computer-assisted IEPs. In one case, Aaron S. v. Westford Public Schools (Education of the Handicapped Law Report [EHLR] 509:122 , MA. 1987), the hearing officer stated that "the resulting plan lacks the specificity that parents have a right to expect" (EHLR 509:127). Specifically, the school district was advised to provide IEPs that sufficiently reflected each student's needs (not just those within a given database) so that parents could make informed determinations as to the appropriateness of the proposed program. Additionally, OCR investigated a case in Illinois, Rockford School District #205, (EHLR 352:465, IL. 1987) and found the computer-assisted IEPs to be deficient in stating present level of educational performance, annual goals and short-term objectives, and related services.

## Recommendations

Computer-assisted IEPs can be viewed as a technological response that offers an opportunity to improve upon the substantive quality and bureaucratic demands associated with the IEP. Using computers to monitor IEP progress, establish review dates, and document completion of objectives can be useful to special education professionals. Computer assistance has the promise to improve correspondence between performance levels and goals. Technology can reduce and streamline the resources needed to meet the various bureaucratic demands. Despite such promise, however, few answers are available to guide the use of computers to improve the IEP in a substantive way. A number of questions are offered to guide professionals who now have or are thinking about computer assistance in developing IEPs

- Can computer-assisted IEPs better serve students, parents, and teachers while meeting bureaucratic and organizational demands?

- Can IEPs generated by computer programs through a pre-established bank of goals and objectives remain true to the nature of special education?

- Can the technology help us attain the involvement of parents as equal partners in the IEP process?

There are no universal answers to these questions; teachers, administrators, supervisors, and other education professionals need to answer them for themselves. The answers will be clearer when viewed within the parameters of local district needs, values, and attitudes about developing appropriate programming for children and youth with disabilities.

## SUMMARY

Much has been written about IEP procedural compliance. During the early implementation years, attention was focused on IEP procedural correctness (i.e., whether or not the required IEP components were present). In contrast, far less attention has been focused on the question of whether the IEP is indeed a functional plan for instruction and the provision of related services.

This chapter has presented the IEP not only as a document but also as a dynamic process (see additional suggested readings in Appendix E). It is during this process of developing the IEP with various professionals, parents/advocates, and students that we can move beyond compliance and make the IEP a document from which meaningful instruction can emerge. Information in this chapter can be helpful when organizing and documenting special education services. By understanding the IEP, engaging in best practices with parents/advocates, and making informed decisions about the use of computers to assist in IEP development, we can facilitate better "specially designed instruction" that is the basis of special education and the intent and spirit of IDEA.

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# APPENDIX A

## Detailed List of Related Services in Special Education

## Detailed List of Related Services in Special Education

| | |
|---|---|
| Audiology | (a) Identification of children with hearing loss;<br>(b) Determination of the range, nature, degree of hearing loss, including referral for medical or other professional attention for the habilitation of hearing;<br>(c) Provision of habilitative activities, such as language habilitation, auditory training, speech reading (lip reading), hearing evaluation, and speech conservation;<br>(d) Creation and administration of programs for prevention of hearing loss;<br>(e) Counseling and guidance of pupils, parents, and teachers regarding hearing loss; and<br>(f) Determination of the child's need for group and individual amplification, selecting and fitting an appropriate aid, and evaluating the effectiveness of amplification. |
| Counseling Services | Services provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel. |
| Early Identification | Implementation of a formal plan for identifying a disability as early as possible in a child's life. |
| Medical Services | Services provided by a licensed physician to determine a child's medically related handicapping condition which results in the child's need for special education and related services. |
| Occupational Therapy | (a) Improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation;<br>(b) Improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning when functions are impaired or lost; and<br>(c) Preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment for loss of function. |
| Parent Counseling and Training | Assisting parents in understanding the special needs of their child and providing parents with information about child development. |
| Physical Therapy | Services provided by a qualified therapist. |
| Psychological Services | (a) Administering psychological and educational tests, and other assessment procedures;<br>(b) Interpreting assessment results;<br>(c) Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions relating to learning;<br>(d) Consulting with other staff members in planning school programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated by psychological tests, interviews, and behavioral evaluations; and<br>(e) Planning and managing a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents. |
| Recreation | (a) Assessment of leisure function;<br>(b) Therapeutic recreation services;<br>(c) Recreation programs in schools and community agencies; and<br>(d) Leisure education. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| School Health Services | Services provided by a qualified school nurse or other qualified person. | |
| Social Work Services | (a) | Preparing a social or developmental history on a handicapped child; |
| | (b) | Group and individual counseling with the child and family; |
| | (c) | Working with those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; and |
| | (d) | Mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to receive maximum benefit from his or her educational program. |
| Speech Pathology | (a) | Identification of children with speech or language disorders; |
| | (b) | Diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language disorders; |
| | (c) | Referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language disorders; |
| | (d) | Provisions of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative disorders; and |
| | (e) | Counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language disorders. |
| Transportation | (a) | Travel to and from school and between schools; |
| | (b) | Travel in and around school buildings; and |
| | (c) | Specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a handicapped child. |

*Source: Federal Registry, 42 (163), August 23, 1977.*

# APPENDIX B

## Questionnaire for a Completed IEP

## Questionnaire for a Completed IEP

*Yes* *No*

___ ___ 1. The IEP was completed within the specified time line.

a. Date of referral ________
b. Date student was determined to be disabled ________
c. Date of IEP approval ________

___ ___ 2. The IEP committee included all required participants.

a. Name of teacher attending ________________________________
b. Name of individual responsible for providing or supervising special education attending ________________________________
c. Name of evaluator attending ________________________________
d. Name of parent attending ________________________________
e. Other persons attending ________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

___ ___ 3. The IEP included all required components.

Check if included:

a. Present levels of performance ____
b. Annual goals ____
c. Short-term objectives ____
d. Special education and related services ____
e. Extent of participation in regular education program ____
f. Projected date of initiated and anticipated duration of services ____
g. Objective criteria and evaluation procedures ____
h. Transition plan

___ ___ 4. Services specified on the IEP are being delivered.

a. Services specified ________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

b. Services delivered ________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

___ ___ 5. All follow-up information that parents requested in the IEP conference has been provided to them.

a. Information requested ________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

b. Information provided ________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

*Yes* *No*

___ ___ 6. Evaluation of instructional objectives is being conducted on a periodic basis.

a. Type of evaluation specified ______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

b. Type of evaluation completed ______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

c. Frequency of evaluation ______________________________
______________________________

___ ___ 7. If necessary, the IEP has been revised to specify more appropriately the student's instructional program.

a. Reason for revision ______________________________
b. Nature of revision ______________________________
c. Date of reapproved IEP ______________

___ ___ 8. An IEP committee meeting for the purpose of periodic review has been scheduled.

Date of meeting ___________

___ ___ 9. Specify obstacles that may have prevented the appropriate development and implementation of the student's IEP______________________________
________________________________________________

*Source:* *Developing and Implementing Individualized Education Programs, Third Edition, 1990, Merrill Publishing Company.*

# APPENDIX C

## Sample Checklist for Documenting IEP Appropriateness

## Checklist for Documenting IEP Appropriateness

Student Name ______________________________
Date of Committee Meeting ______________________________
Committee Chairperson ______________________________

| | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Legal Requirements* | | | |
| 1. Does Plan include all information required by law? | | | |
| a. level of performance | | | |
| b. annual goals | | | |
| c. short-term instructional objectives | | | |
| d. schedules of evaluation | | | |
| e. procedures for evaluation | | | |
| f. related services | | | |
| g. specific special education | | | |
| h. extent of participation in the regular classroom | | | |
| i. projected dates for initiation and duration of services | | | |
| *Relevance* | | | |
| 1. Are goals, objectives, evaluation procedures, placement, and services: | | | |
| a. appropriate to the disability of the student? | | | |
| b. determined in consideration of identified strengths and weaknesses? | | | |
| c. appropriate to the student's level of performance? | | | |
| 2. Are the specified evaluation procedures correlated with the goals and objectives? | | | |
| 3. Do the minimum acceptable criteria stated in objectives seem realistic for the student? | | | |
| *Manageability* | | | |
| 1. Is the anticipated progress proportional to the amount of instructional time available? | | | |
| 2. Are the procedures scheduled for evaluation reasonable considering the time and methods involved? | | | |
| 3. Has the method for provision of related services been determined? | | | |
| *Clarity* | | | |
| 1. Is the terminology used in the plan understandable to all other committee members? | | | |

|  | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Is the student's level of performance specified in terms of specific skill statements? |  |  |  |
| 3. Do short-term instructional objectives clearly state: |  |  |  |
| a. the specific behavior to be required of the student? |  |  |  |
| b. the condition under which the behavior is to occur? |  |  |  |
| c. the minimum acceptable criteria for attaining the objectives? |  |  |  |
| 4. Do annual goals indicate what the student will be able to do when the IEP is terminated? |  |  |  |
| 5. Do evaluation procedures specify the type of evaluation to be used and, where appropriate, specific tests? |  |  |  |
| 6. Does the schedule of evaluation clearly indicate how often evaluation will occur? |  |  |  |
| 7. Is the special education to be provided stated in specific terms? |  |  |  |
| 8. Are related services clearly specified in terms of extent or amount of services to be provided? |  |  |  |

*Source*: *Developing and Implementing Individualized Education Programs, Third Edition, 1990, Merrill Publishing Company*

# APPENDIX D

## Suggestions for Involving Parents in IEP Conferences

## Suggestions for Involving Parents in IEP Conferences

### PRECONFERENCE PREPARATION

- Appoint a service coordinator to organize all aspects of the IEP conference.
- Solicit information from the family about their preferences and needs regarding the conference.
- Discuss the meeting with the student and consider his or her preferences concerning the conference.
- Decide who should attend the conference and include the student, if appropriate.
- Arrange a convenient time and location for the meeting.
- Assist families with logistical needs such as transportation and child care.
- Without educational jargon, inform the family verbally and/or in writing of the following:
    - Purpose of the meeting
    - Time and location of conference
    - Names of participants
- Encourage the student, family members, and their advocates to visit the proposed placements for the student prior to the conference.
- Facilitate communication between the student and family members about the conference.
- Encourage families to share information and discuss concerns with participants prior to the conference.
- Gather needed information from school personnel.
- Prepare an agenda to cover the remaining components of the IEP conference.

### INITIAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

- Greet the students, family, and their advocates.
- Provide a list of all participants or use name tags.
- Introduce each participant with a brief description of his or her role in the conference.
- State the purpose of the meeting. Review the agenda and ask for additional issues to be covered.
- Determine the amount of time participants have available for the conference and offer the option of rescheduling, if needed, to complete the agenda.
- Ask if family members desire clarification of their legal rights.

### REVIEW OF FORMAL EVALUATION AND CURRENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

- Provide family members with a written copy of evaluation results if desired.
- Avoid educational jargon as much as possible and clarify diagnostic terminology throughout the conference.
- If a separate evaluation conference has not been scheduled, ask diagnostic personnel to report the following:
    - The tests administered
    - The results of each
    - Options based on the evaluation.
- Summarize the findings including strengths, gifts, abilities, and needs.
- Identify implications of test results for planning purposes.
- Ask families for areas of agreement and disagreement with corresponding reasons.
- Review the student's developmental progress and current levels of performance in each class.
- Ask families if they agree or disagree with the stated progress and performance levels.
- Strive to resolve any disagreement with student work samples and solicit information from families about collecting further samples.
- Proceed with the IEP only when you and the family members agree about the students' exceptionality and current levels of performance.

## DEVELOPMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Encourage the student, family members, and advocates to share their expectations for the student's participation in the home, school, and community.
- Collaboratively generate appropriate goals and objectives for all subject areas requiring special instruction consistent with expectations.
- Discuss goals and objectives for future educational and vocational options based on great expectations for the student.
- Identify objectives to expand the positive contributions the student can make to family, friends, and community.
- Prioritize all goals and objectives in light of student preferences and needs.
- Clarify the manner in which the responsibility for teaching the objectives will be shared among the student's teachers.
- Ask family members and advocates if they would like to share in the responsibility for teaching some of the objectives at home or in the community.
- Determine evaluation procedures and schedules for identified goals and objectives.
- Explain to family members and advocates that the IEP is not a guarantee that the student will attain the goals; rather, it represents a good-faith effort on the part of school personnel that they will teach these goals and objectives.

## DETERMINATION OF PLACEMENT AND RELATED SERVICES

- Include the student, family members, and advocates in a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of viable placement options.
- Select a placement option that allows the student to be involved with peers without exceptionalities as much as possible.
- Agree on a tentative placement until the family members can visit and confirm its appropriateness.
- Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of modes of delivery for related services the student needs.
- Specify the dates for initiating related services and anticipated duration.
- Share the names and qualifications of all personnel who will provide services with family members and advocates.

## CONCLUDING THE CONFERENCE

- Assign follow-up responsibility for any task requiring attention.
- Review with the student, family members, and advocates any responsibilities they have agreed to assume.
- Summarize orally and on paper the major decisions and follow-up responsibilities of all participants.
- Set a tentative date for reviewing the IEP document.
- Identify strategies for ongoing communication with the student, family members, and advocates.
- Express appreciation to the student, family members, and advocates for their help in the decision-making process.

*Source:* *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: A Special Partnership, Second Edition, 1990, Merrill Publishing Company.*

# APPENDIX E

## Recommended Readings About IEP Development and Implementation

## Recommended Readings About IEP Development and Implementation

Anderson, W., Chitwood, S., & Hayden, D. (1990). Negotiating the special education maze: A guide for parents and teachers. Rockville, MD: Woodbine House.

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## Chapter 6

# Curriculum Adaptation and Development

*Virginia Laycock McLaughlin*

## INTRODUCTION

Simply put, curriculum is the *what* of instruction (Glickman, 1990). It includes the *explicit* curriculum (what is intended to be taught), the *delivered* curriculum (what is actually taught), and the *received* curriculum (what students actually learn) (VanTassel-Baska, Feldhusen, Seeley, Wheatley, Silverman, & Foster, 1988). Accordingly, curriculum is the very core of the educational program.

A strong working knowledge of curriculum helps both teachers and administrators recognize the full range of options that must be available to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Clarification of the relationship of curriculum to instruction and delivery systems underscores the primacy of curriculum decisions. That is, decisions about the appropriate content of the program for the intended learners should drive all related decisions such as selection of teaching methods and determination of placement. Careful curriculum planning is especially important for successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Hoover, 1987; Laycock & Korinek, 1989). In addition, a well-articulated curriculum enhances the credibility and accountability of special education programming by conveying appropriately high expectations through core curriculum standards (Murphy & Hallingher, 1985) and by establishing the foundation for curriculum-based assessment (Sage & Burello, 1986).

This chapter provides administrators with an overview of major curriculum options and systematic processes for selection, adaptation, and design of a curriculum for students with disabilities. The chapter is organized around the following five questions commonly asked by administrators:

1. **What are the major curriculum options for students with disabilities?**
2. **How does the individualized education program (IEP) fit into curriculum planning?**
3. **What are some common formats for curriculum materials?**
4. **How should educators decide whether to adapt existing curriculum materials or design their own?**
5. **What are the critical steps for designing a new curriculum?**

## 1. WHAT ARE MAJOR CURRICULUM OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

Currently, two frames of reference predominate in conceptions of curriculum for students in special education. One is the standard curriculum of general education and the other is a functional orientation. While these are not mutually exclusive, they reflect different priorities for educational programs.

### The Standard Curriculum of General Education

This orientation represents a developmental and primarily academic concept of curriculum. Subject matter content may be discipline specific (e.g., history or mathematics) or interdisciplinary in nature (e.g., applied science or humanities). Comprehensive curriculum goals are typically translated into objectives or intended outcomes for each grade level. Although initiatives are under way to define national curriculum standards, most states have their own curriculum guidelines. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Standards of Learning developed in the 1980s and now the Common Core of Learning for the 1990s and beyond provide a statewide frame of reference for the general education curriculum. Individual school divisions then select or develop basal curriculum materials to address state standards in each area.

This standard or general education curriculum is an appropriate initial frame of reference for planning special education curriculum. In fact, pursuit of this curriculum is least restrictive for students in that it maintains graduation and diploma options (Laycock & Korinek, 1989). The standard curriculum is individualized for specific students by adapting delivery strategies. Adaptations may include, for example, increasing emphasis on selected components of the curriculum; adjusting the pace of the curriculum; and tailoring teaching strategies, student activities, and evaluation procedures to the unique needs of students with disabilities.

### A Functional Orientation

While the standard curriculum is one important frame of reference, it might not explicitly address many areas of critical need for students with disabilities. A more specialized curriculum is often necessary to prepare students with disabilities to function as independently as possible in a variety of age-appropriate settings. From a functional perspective, curriculum content is derived from an analysis of activities and skills needed to succeed in current and future environments. These settings include domestic, school, community, work, and leisure-recreational environments (Polloway, Patton, Epstein, & Smith, 1989; Snell & Grigg, 1987; Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project, 1990). Strong emphasis is placed on preparing students for making successful transitions from school to adult community and work settings. (See Chapter 10 for specific information on transition programming.)

The specific content addressed may include academic subjects with a more functional orientation such as personal budgeting in mathematics or survival vocabulary in reading; academic-related skills such as learning strategies and study skills; social-behavioral skills such as communicating with peers and adults or problem solving; as well as basic motor, communication, and self-care skills required for participation in a broad range of activities. A functional orientation is sometimes described as a "top-down" orientation to curriculum, because the target objectives for each individual student are derived from analyses of successful participation in natural environments. The program then focuses on maximizing the student's ability to function in those settings.

Between the standard and functional orientations, there are a number of curriculum options that are appropriate for students with disabilities. Figure 1 lists and briefly describes each of these major options. One or several specific options may be selected for an individual student's program. The curricula of choice are likely to change over time. For these reasons, establishing appropriate curricular priorities is one of the greatest challenges in special education. Deciding what is most important for a given student at any particular point in time requires careful consideration of a number of factors, including the nature and severity of learner needs, learner history, age or grade level, critical needs in present environments, critical needs in the next less restrictive environment, and logical sequencing within each curriculum area (Laycock, 1992).

## 2. HOW DOES THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) FIT INTO CURRICULUM PLANNING?

The IEP is widely viewed as the hallmark of curriculum planning in special education. (See Chapter 5 for more specific information on IEPs.) Developed by a team, the IEP specifies all of the critical components of the individual's educational program for the year, including the goals and objectives to be taught and learned (the curriculum). The emphasis on individualization, along with attention to the IEP for compliance monitoring, may have led many educators to lose sight of the broader curricular context.

Figure 2 presents a continuum for curriculum planning that illustrates where the IEP fits into the total scheme for both decision making and implementation. As previously discussed, the comprehensive orientations of standard curriculum and functional curriculum, with the full range of options in between, provide the frames of reference for individualized programming. The annual IEP, then, includes only the curriculum targets judged most important for the particular learner in a given year. The IEP must then be translated into manageable units of curriculum content and time. The units may address content to be covered over a semester, a grading period, or a set number of weeks. The unit itself is translated into a series of lessons and is actually delivered to students through the daily lesson plan.

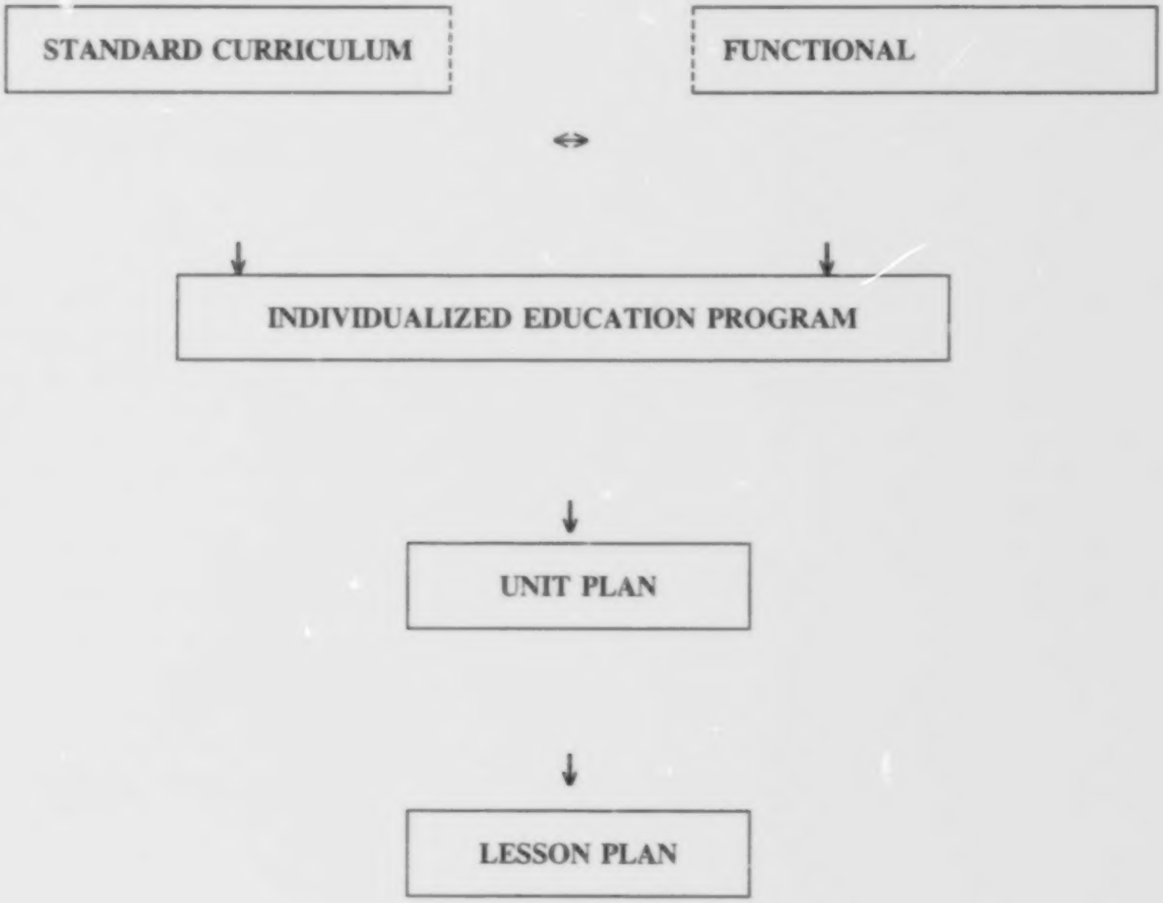
## Figure 1

# Major Curriculum Options for Special Education

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard Curriculum with Adaptions | Uses the ongoing general education curriculum with modifications in presentation, practice, and evaluation methods to suit individual learner needs. |
| Parallel Alternate Curriculum | Emphasizes essential objectives from the standard curriculum but structures the curriculum, instructional strategies, and evaluation procedures to accommodate groups of learners with special needs. |
| Remedial Basic Skills Curriculum | Focuses on identification and intensive instruction to correct specific deficits in basic literacy areas of language arts, reading, and mathematics. |
| Thematic Unit Curriculum | Organizes interdisciplinary content around highly motivating themes or issues as a vehicle for addressing basic skills development in a meaningful and functional context. |
| Learning Strategies/ Study Skills Curriculum | Emphasizes principles, rules, and techniques that enable students to learn, solve problems, and function more independently in classroom and social settings. |
| Social Skills Curriculum | Addresses prosocial development and/or identified deficits in basic communication, coping, and survival skills. |
| Career-Vocational Education | Encompasses comprehensive experiences through which students learn about and prepare for productive engagement in postsecondary work environments. |
| Independent Living Skills Curriculum | Emphasizes current skill needs and adult outcomes required for successful functioning in major life domains, environments, and activities. |

Figure 2

A Continuum for Curriculum Planning


STANDARD CURRICULUM
FUNCTIONAL
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM
UNIT PLAN
LESSON PLAN

Viewing curriculum in terms of a continuum is useful in that it emphasizes the coherence that is critical to the planning process. The IEP is clearly pivotal in curriculum planning. The IEP must be developed, however, with reference to a more comprehensive curriculum to benefit from best practices and ensure continuity for the student's program over time. In turn, it must provide direction for unit and lesson planning to ensure that the intended goals and objectives are actualized through the student's daily instructional experiences.

## 3. WHAT ARE SOME COMMON FORMATS FOR CURRICULUM MATERIALS?

Written curriculum may be presented in a number of different formats, ranging from simple lists of intended outcomes to elaborate kits with complete teachers' guides and multimedia for addressing their objectives. The most basic curriculum format is a skills sequence that Glickman (1990) described as "results-only." Curriculum written in the results -- only format presents sequenced listings of the goals or outcomes in a particular subject or unit. Usually, the outcomes are stated as verb phrases specifying what the student is to know or be able to do upon completion of the curriculum. Examples of results -- only statements might include the following: "Names coins"; "Adds coins to one dollar"; "Makes change for one dollar." With this curriculum format, the teacher is responsible for determining the specific instructional methods, teaching materials, and assessment procedures.

Another common curriculum format uses behavioral objectives. As in the results-only format, behavioral objectives are listed in sequence for each subject or skill area. Complete behavioral objectives, however, specify not only the behavior to be demonstrated but also the conditions and criteria for acceptable performance. If the unit on money skills were written in behavioral objective format, the statements might appear as follows: "Given coins of different denominations up to one dollar, the student will state the correct amount on four of five trials." The behavioral objective format directs the teacher to specific teaching materials and assessment procedures.

Although sequenced lists are the most typical way of presenting results-only statements or behavioral objectives, webbing and conceptual mapping are also used to illustrate more complex relationships among intended outcomes within a curriculum (Glickman, 1990). For example, webbing begins with a subject theme and then develops related themes, activities, and possible outcomes. This format is particularly appropriate for interdisciplinary units linking art, music, language arts, social studies, mathematics, or science.

Finally, some curriculum is formatted as an integrated curriculum and instructional package. Many curriculum materials developed locally or available from commercial vendors specify not only what is to be taught (the intended outcomes of the curriculum) but also how it should be taught (the instructional procedures). The familiar basal series epitomizes this format, for it includes comprehensive listings of the scope and sequence of the curriculum along with complete lesson plans, teaching materials, differentiated activities for diverse learning needs, and its own testing program.

Format is largely a matter of preference for both the developer(s) and user(s). What is critical is that curricular components are clearly distinguished from instructional components, so that the merits of each can be judged appropriately.

## 4. HOW SHOULD EDUCATORS DECIDE WHETHER TO ADAPT EXISTING CURRICULUM MATERIALS OR DESIGN THEIR OWN?

For effective educational programming, teachers need to access appropriate curriculum resources for all levels of the planning continuum from comprehensive scope and sequence guides to supplementary materials for daily lessons. Finding the right curriculum materials for students with unique learning needs may be difficult. If no adequate or easily adapted materials can be located, it may be necessary to develop a new curriculum.

Because curriculum adaptation and design are complex, collaborative, and creative endeavors, there are no set formulas for developers to follow. Existing models and guidelines are helpful in that they suggest considerations and specific tasks that contribute to a more complete and systematic approach. The curriculum planning model presented in Figure 3 represents a composite of several different models. The basic "4-D" structure -- Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate -- (Thiagarajan, Semmel, & Semmel, 1974) has been expanded to include an aDapt step, and it has been combined with subtasks derived from a variety of sources (e.g., Budde, 1981; Glatthorn, 1990; Haas, 1987; Hunkins, 1985). Both adaptation and design of a curriculum begin with a thorough definitional phase. Only after careful analysis of user needs and available options are educators able to decide whether they are better off to adapt existing curriculum materials or design new ones.

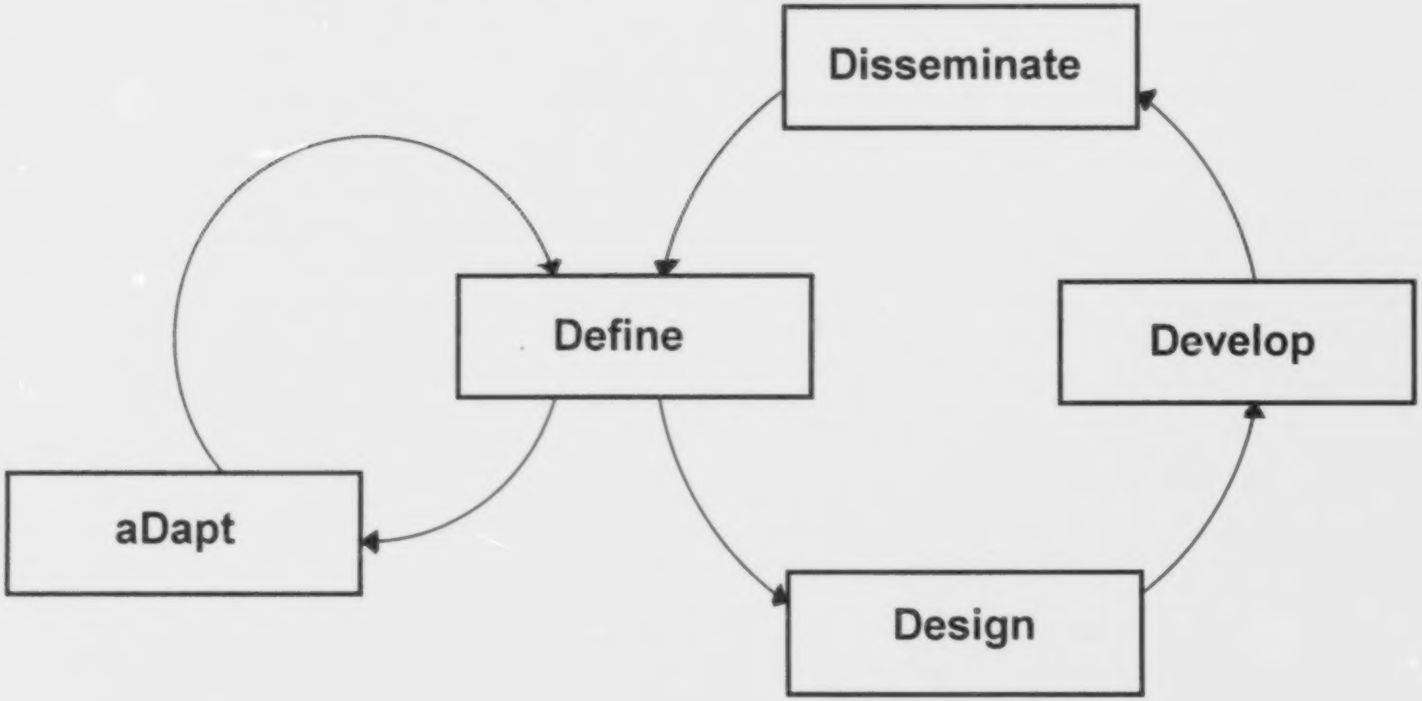
While the stages of the model are presented in a typical sequential order, the actual process is more dynamic. Subtasks are often accomplished concurrently, and decisions at later stages sometimes necessitate recycling to earlier stages of the process. Each of the stages and tasks is briefly described here.

### Define

*Form a Curriculum Planning Team*. The quality of decisions and the likelihood of meaningful change are enhanced by having major stakeholders actively involved in curriculum planning. Those closest to the needs of students, especially teachers and parents, are key participants. It is often helpful to have both general and special education perspectives represented, as well as those from community, postsecondary, and work settings.

Figure 3

**Curriculum Adaptation and Design**


Disseminate
Define
Develop
aDapt
Design

*Devise a Management Plan*. The management plan should delineate all major tasks to be accomplished, individuals responsible, and timelines for completion. A suitable timeline allows adequate time for comprehensive input and encourages continuous enthusiasm and effort. In developing a timeline, it often helps to work backwards from the dates when products will be needed.

*Specify Learner Needs*. Analysis of outcome accountability program (OAP) data, individual and group assessment profiles, and IEPs will suggest the curriculum options that need to be addressed within the educational program. Further analysis will narrow the scope to more specific concept and skill areas.

*Identify Teacher Needs*. Determination of teachers' experiences with relevant curriculum materials, their access to resources, and their preferences regarding curriculum formats and other features is an important part of needs assessment.

*Articulate a Philosophy and Rationale for the Curriculum*. The team should agree on a philosophy that reflects their beliefs about what students need to learn in the target area and why. The curriculum philosophy should be consistent with the overall philosophy of the school's general and special education programs and with relevant federal and state mandates.

*Specify Overall Goals for the Curriculum*. The focus of the curriculum should reflect the philosophy developed by the curriculum team. Selection of priority needs and discussion of how to meet those needs provide direction for subsequent curriculum adaptation or design tasks.

*Specify Standards or Criteria for the Curriculum*. Clarification of expectations or essential features of a "good" curriculum in the target area should be done early in the process. These expectations become the standards for appraising the suitability of the existing curriculum. Should it become necessary, they also provide a blueprint for the design of a new curriculum and later serve as the basis for evaluating that curriculum.

It is often helpful to have curriculum standards articulated in the form of a rating scale. Several rating scales have attempted to incorporate standards derived from literature on best practices in both general and special education (Englert, 1984; Reisberg, 1990; VanTassel-Baska & Laycock, 1992). The *Curriculum Evaluation Guide*, presented in Appendix A, is an example of a guide that focuses on general considerations for technical adequacy, as well as special curriculum considerations for students with disabilities.

*Assess Suitability of Available Curriculum Materials*. Teams should locate and appraise available materials using a checklist or rating scale such as the *Curriculum Evaluation Guide*. Users of this guide are instructed to examine thoroughly all components of a curriculum under consideration. They then rate the curriculum on each of the 22 standards in terms of whether it meets the standard, could be modified to meet the standard, or fails to meet the standard. Ratings in each category are tallied, and additional comments can be noted.

*Define the Scope of the Current Design Effort*. Selection and adaptation of existing curriculum materials is far more cost effective than designing new materials. The analysis of gaps in the existing curriculum accomplished during this definitional stage suggests what is needed, but the team may not be able to address all identified needs at once. The team must consider personnel and time commitments, availability of technical assistance, and other resource issues in order to define feasible parameters for this project. The team should proceed with a design effort only if there are no materials available that approximate defined needs and are suitable for adaption.

**aDapt**

*Select Curriculum Materials that Approximate Standards*. Systematic analysis and rating using an instrument such as the Curriculum Evaluation Guide permit comparison of different curriculum materials for potential purchase or use. Preferred materials are those that come closest to satisfying the standards and can be most easily adapted in areas of relative weakness.

*Modify the Curriculum in Identified Areas of Concern*. Most curriculum materials will require some adaptation prior to use with the intended learners. The level of detail on the *Curriculum Evaluation Guide* is helpful in pinpointing the specific aspects of the curriculum that need to be modified. For example, a curriculum assigned a rating of "2" on item 6 -- Coherent Structure and Order to Content -- would require some revamping in order to meet specifications. Certain objectives may be expanded or sequenced differently to eliminate gaps and create a more logical structure for the curriculum. In another instance, a curriculum may be rated poorly on item 12 -- Authentic, Curriculum-Based Evaluation Procedures -- because it fails to include any suggested measures of student performance. If the curriculum is otherwise sound, users may overcome this particular weakness by developing their own curriculum-based assessments.

*Pilot the Modified Curriculum*. After necessary adjustments have been made in the design of the existing material, it should be more appropriate for use with the intended learners. However, the only real way to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum is to implement it and monitor student performance.

## 5. WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL STEPS FOR DESIGNING A NEW CURRICULUM?

Although adaptation of existing materials is clearly the preferred approach, the curriculum planning team may decide during the definitional stage that there are legitimate reasons to design a new curriculum. Curriculum development is a multistep process that requires input from a variety of stakeholders, a consensus of agreement as to focus and directions, and an organized plan of development and implementation. Careful planning from the outset allows for a feasible timeline; a reasonable workload for the persons involved; and sufficient support for implementation, evaluation, and revision. What follows is a brief description of each of the steps in the design cycle.

**Step 1: Design**

*Define Specific Student Outcomes*. Outcomes are statements of objectives that indicate what students are expected to achieve upon completion of the program. Objectives are typically derived from clear understanding of the structure of the discipline and available research on subject matter curriculum. For more functional targets, a top-down, task-analytic approach is most useful.

*Determine Curriculum Formats*. A variety of formats can be used to attain the desired outcomes. Teams become more aware of alternatives by collecting, reviewing, and discussing samples of different curricula. Selected formats must match the philosophy and defined standards for the curriculum and meet the needs and preferences of the users (i.e., students and teachers).

*Create Learning Activities and Media*. Specific strategies and materials for instruction and student practice must be correlated with objectives to provide unit and/or lesson guides. Many of the considerations addressed in Chapter 7 on Effective Instruction are relevant to this aspect of curriculum design.

*Design Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBAs)*. Assessment measures should be devised during this phase of curriculum design in conjunction with objectives and instructional activities. Although some relevant tests or existing measures may be available, it is usually necessary to develop assessments specifically linked to the curriculum. (For more information on CBA, see Chapter 7.) CBAs are helpful to teachers for determining student entry skills and monitoring their performance throughout the program. CBAs are also important for the evaluation of curriculum effectiveness.

**Step 2: Develop**

*Complete the Prototype Curriculum*. Once the curriculum has been conceptualized during the design stage, the core team develops the actual materials according to those defined specifications. Some technical assistance may be needed to support production efforts, especially if the curriculum includes multimedia or computer software.

*Conduct Design Evaluation*. The prototype materials should undergo design evaluation prior to their implementation. External reviewers should include several individuals with recognized expertise in the content area and in curriculum and instructional design, as well as teachers who are representative of the intended users. The team also may choose to involve other important stakeholders such as administrators and parents in the review process. These reviewers evaluate the curriculum primarily in terms of its face validity: Does it have what it takes to accomplish its intended outcomes? The standards that the team adopted during the "Define" stage now provide the criteria for design evaluation. A rating scale such as the *Curriculum Evaluation Guide* in the Appendix helps to structure the review process.

*Revise the Prototype*. Evaluative feedback from reviewers who represent different and critical perspectives provides the development team with a clearer sense of direction. Strengths of the curriculum are affirmed, and areas of concern are identified for revision. If the responses of the reviewers suggest a major overhaul of the curriculum, another cycle of prototype development and design evaluation may be necessary.

*Conduct a Developmental Pilot of the Curriculum*. By this point, the team should have a well-written curriculum that is ready for a trial run. The developmental pilot should involve implementation of the curriculum by a few representative teachers with target students. They should use the curriculum as written, carefully documenting what actually works and does not work in the classroom. The curriculum-based assessments written into the program provide critical data on student performance.

*Revise the Curriculum*. The developmental pilot typically reveals a number of "kinks" in the curriculum that were impossible to anticipate prior to implementation. The team can then make revisions before the curriculum is used more widely. Several pilot and revision cycles may be necessary to work through more complicated curriculum components.

### Step 3: Disseminate

*Field Test the Curriculum*. When the team is satisfied with the revised draft of the curriculum, it is ready for more extensive field testing with additional teachers and students. The goal is standardized implementation that will allow consistent judgments to be made about the curriculum's effectiveness. The team needs this information to support its assertion that if the curriculum is implemented as intended users can expect student attainment of the target objectives.

*Complete Final Revisions and Packaging*. The team has another opportunity to use information gathered during field testing to refine curriculum materials. With teacher and student input, the team can ensure that the material not only is effective but also is packaged in a way that is appealing and "user friendly."

*Make the Curriculum Available to Other Internal and External Users*. As a result of this process, the team has a product that is worth sharing with others. Depending on the scope of the project, this may mean making it available to other teachers in the building or school division or disseminating it statewide or nationally. It is possible that in some instances the team may even pursue commercial publication of a curriculum that is especially strong or innovative.

## SUMMARY

Administrators who are knowledgeable about the special education curriculum are able to provide effective leadership and support for their teachers who serve students with disabilities. This chapter provided an overview of the major curriculum options appropriate for students receiving special education. In addition, systematic processes for appraisal, selection, and adaptation of existing materials or the development of a new curriculum have been offered. Done well, the process of curriculum development is both challenging and resource intensive. For this reason, location of appropriate curricula and adaptation for their use with targeted students is generally advised over development of a new curriculum. However, given the unique needs of learners and the limited availability of curricula in certain areas, it will be necessary at times to develop some curricula locally. The approach described in this chapter can lead to the production of a curriculum that meets local needs and is also worthy of dissemination.

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# APPENDIX A

## Curriculum Evaluation Guide

## Curriculum Evaluation Guide

Name of Reviewer:______________________________Title:______________________________

Title of Curriculum:__________________________________________________

Source/Publisher:____________________________________________________

Recommended Grade Level(s):________________________________________

Format:____________________________________________________________

**Directions:** Carefully read through all curriculum materials. Then rate the curriculum on each of the 22 items using the following scale:

1 - Curriculum meets the standard
2 - Curriculum could be modified to meet the standard
3 - Curriculum does not meet the standard

### GENERAL ADEQUACY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Substantive rationale and purpose | 1 2 3 |
| 2. | Clearly defined goals and objectives | 1 2 3 |
| 3. | Curriculum content appropriate to objectives | 1 2 3 |
| 4. | Significant content appropriate to the discipline/subject matter area | 1 2 3 |
| 5. | Emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving | 1 2 3 |
| 6. | Coherent structure and order to content | 1 2 3 |
| 7. | Global, multicultural perspective | 1 2 3 |
| 8. | Instructional strategies appropriate to objectives | 1 2 3 |

9. Appropriateness for developmental levels and styles of intended learners 1 2 3

10. Responsiveness to affective and social needs of intended learners 1 2 3

11. Varied strategies for both individuals and groups 1 2 3

12. Authentic, curriculum-based evaluation procedures 1 2 3

13. Technical adequacy of media and technology 1 2 3

14. Additional, supportive resources for teachers and learners 1 2 3

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

15. Relevance of the curriculum to present and future environments 1 2 3

16. Emphasis on data-based instructional decision making 1 2 3

17. Attention to development of independence and social competence 1 2 3

18. Structured lessons geared to stages of learning 1 2 3

19. Appropriate teacher modeling, cueing, and reinforcement 1 2 3

20. Varied formats and pacing for guided and independent practice 1 2 3

21. Provision for appropriate assistive technology 1 2 3

22. Attention to maintenance and generalization 1 2 3

**TOTALS** _ _ _

**COMMENTS:**

Chapter 7

# Effective Instruction: Principles and Strategies for Programs

*Sandra B. Cohen*

## INTRODUCTION

Instruction that reaches its fullest potential is effective instruction. This implies that the efforts put forth in teaching are reflected in the achievements of the learners. For teachers to teach effectively, they must work with administrators who understand both the theory and the implementation of instructional principles. The application of effective instruction for special education builds on a framework of process-product research with an emphasis on adaptations to meet individual student needs. The following are questions that guide the understanding of effective instruction in special education programs. They have been used to structure the development of this chapter.

1. **What is effective instruction?**
2. **What do we know about the learner, the task, and the presentation that impacts on instructional effectiveness?**
3. **What common instructional variables are important for learners with special needs?**
4. **What instructional approaches have proved to be especially effective with students with learning problems?**
5. **How does an instructional program for students with moderate to severe disabilities differ from one for students with mild learning difficulties?**

## 1. WHAT IS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION?

Effective instruction, as a broad concept, relates to systematic instruction that consistently leads to achievement considered critical for future success. Based on process-product literature, support of effective instruction focuses on teacher behaviors that relate to instructional activities. More explicitly, the purpose of effective instruction is to increase student success rates by (a) teaching relevant material in small steps, (b) relating new learning to old, (c) presenting information in a direct manner with numerous opportunities for student responding, (d) and providing teacher feedback. The research supporting effective instruction has been well documented for almost 20 years (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Brophy, 1982;

Englert, Tarrant, & Mariage, 1992; Rosenshine, 1986) and has led to a set of explicit teaching strategies that are consistently employed by effective teachers. These effective teaching practices are as follows:

- "Begin a lesson with short statement of goals.
- Begin a lesson with a short review of previous, prerequisite learning.
- Present new material in small steps with student practice after each step.
- Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations.
- Provide active practice for all students.
- Ask many questions, check for student understanding, and obtain responses from all students.
- Guide students during initial practice.
- Provide systematic feedback and correction.
- Provide explicit instruction and practice for seatwork exercises and, where necessary, monitor students during seatwork.
- Continue practice until students are independent and confident" (Rosenshine, 1986, pp. 24-25).

These teaching practices are directed toward ensuring a high rate of successful student responses through teacher presentation, student participation, and response consequences. They provide a general framework from which to implement effective instruction. They do not, however, establish a concrete whole that must be followed in its entirety. Effective instruction involves most of the stated practices most of the time. However, teachers should, and do, modify teaching practices as needed to fit the different abilities of their students and allow for appropriate instruction during different stages of the learning sequence. For instance, less difficult material may take less practice, or material that is incorporated into later learning may not require as much concentrated review.

**Effective Instruction for Learners with Special Needs**

Instruction provided under the auspices of special education is planned or carried out with special consideration of the learning characteristics and instructional objectives established for the learner with special needs. It is specifically designed to reduce the interference of a significant learning problem and provide the student with a more structured technology for learning the curriculum. Whether or not a learning problem is a significant one depends on four factors: the age of the child, environmental demands or expectations, the intensity of the problem, and the duration of the problem.

The predominance of research on effective instruction has been done with regular education student and teacher populations. However, the few studies that have focused on special education have confirmed the research findings from regular education (Blanton, 1992). Both sets of research have found that teaching has been organized largely around the prominent findings from two programs of research on effective teaching practices: (1) the process-product research that has become known commonly as effective instruction practices, and (2) research on teacher thinking and processes within specific contexts that has been driven by cognitive psychology. Although the process-product research has the longest history and has been most clearly evidenced in the professional literature, both orientations are influential today in teacher training (Blanton, 1992; Lessen & Frankiewicz, 1992).

Effective instruction for students with special needs includes the elements of any productive program but also goes beyond them to highlight three key features: presentation, practice, and feedback.

Presentation. Information should be presented according to (a) categories of content such as concepts, rules, laws, lawlike principles, and value judgments (Olson & Platt, 1992), and (b) types of knowledge such as declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and conditional knowledge (Reid, 1988). In general, concepts are taught by presentation of a definition, followed by numerous examples and nonexamples. Rules are taught by identifying the rule and providing examples and nonexamples.

Laws (principles that explain the physical world) and lawlike principles (which explain animal and human behavior and are important to social studies and social skills) are taught by identifying the law/principle, explaining the cause and effect, and providing situations that allow students to relate the principle to their own experiences.

Value judgments are the basis for social skills and self-help skill development programs. These are best taught through the development and understanding of social criteria, followed by practice in evaluating situations against the established criteria.

Declarative knowledge relates to learning facts and basic recall information. Procedural knowledge provides the learner with information on how to carry out a task, and conditional knowledge adds information about when and why certain performances are appropriate. Understanding of the different types of knowledge allows a teacher to teach beyond the simple presentation of content and plan for the ways in which students acquire information. Teachers need to acknowledge how, when, and why students learn the material presented to them. Without this understanding, they will be unable to establish appropriate programs and to make effective corrections when students make errors.

Of great importance to the effectiveness of the presentation are the concepts of allocated time, time on task, and engaged time. Allocated time refers to the period of time designated for instruction. Even though it is allocated, time may or may not be used effectively for actual instruction. Therefore, time on task becomes more relevant for determining the effectiveness of instructional time. Engaged time refers specifically to the student's interaction with the lesson material through responding to teacher questions or directions and seatwork activities. Teacher control of time is evidenced in the management of lesson routines, reduced time spent in transitions, maintenance of attention, and the monitoring of appropriate seatwork exercises.

It is important that the teacher of learners with special needs present information by (a) gaining and maintaining student attention to the learning situation; (b) making the material relevant to the learner by giving a rationale for learning, relating the material to old learning, or presenting common experiences that the child finds meaningful; (c) using clear statements and directions; and (d) increasing the number of examples and nonexamples.

In all cases, the teacher must adjust the presentation to the needs of the individual student. To do this, a lesson presentation would include all the elements listed earlier for effective instruction as well as additional measures such as the following:

- Using graphic organizers such as semantic maps and webs to illustrate concepts and relationships.
- Arranging seating to accommodate visual and auditory difficulties.
- Interspersing presentations with questioning techniques to allow for integration of material and checking for understanding.
- Repeating key information to be sure students understand its importance.
- Using verbal cues (e.g., "There are three things to learn," " This is an important definition to know," etc.) to help students process information.
- Preteaching features that have proven difficult in the past (e.g., "Say the vowel sound first; now say the word"), which can help eliminate possible errors.
- Delivering instruction at an appropriately brisk pace.
- Including regular reviews of previously taught information into the teaching routine.
- Focusing attention on critical features to be learned.

Practice. For every major concept, rule, or principle students with special needs are expected to learn, they need to have ample opportunities to practice the content. Practice activities should be functional (i.e., useful in the students' present environment) and directly linked to the main points of the lesson. Through active participation, students with academic problems are drawn into the learning exercise. Guided practice allows a student to respond while still under the supervision of the teacher or an experienced learner and to gain direct and immediate feedback related to response accuracy. Sufficient guided practice has been given when the learner is making few errors. Following guided practice with independent practice will lead to skill automaticity, skill retention, and student independence in future learning. The more opportunities a student has to respond, the greater the likelihood that learning will occur.

Active participation can and should be increased by

- Following short presentations of information with direct guided practice.
- Asking students to check their own or others' work.
- Developing peer dyads or triads for cooperative working, even on simple tasks.
- Using oral responding for verbal practice activities and visual responding for activities that may include permanent products (e.g., "Everyone hold up one finger for true and two fingers for false," or "Class, hold up a number card that equals 6 + 2").
- Providing independent practice on previously learned material to increase retention and build learner confidence.
- Ending all lessons with a firming activity that allows the student to review or apply new information.

Feedback. Defined as informing students about their progress or the results of their learning, feedback is a major teaching function and one that is of great importance to the achievement of students with special needs. Frequent feedback given in the form of reinforcement or correction is an effective means of reducing errors on future responses. Close monitoring of a child's developing skills and understanding of content can in many cases prevent, and in almost all cases reduce learning difficulties. Some students with special needs need microlevel feedback in order to recognize what they are doing and fully understand and incorporate necessary changes.

The purpose of feedback is to effect change. Effective feedback does this in an efficient manner by providing students with information related to their behaviors. Specific feedback informs the student with special needs about which behaviors to maintain and which ones should be altered, as well as how to go about changing a response. Telling a student to try again will not directly increase the student's awareness of his or her response behaviors. In contrast, suggesting that the student's paper was neat and numbers well aligned in the problems but that he or she needs to practice and recheck addition facts involving 8 will give specific guidance. Learners with special needs often have difficulty ascertaining which behaviors are appropriate and which ones need to be changed. As a result, their errors or misbehaviors persist longer than necessary. Effective use of feedback can reduce these problems.

Effective feedback, based largely on Brophy's work on effective praise (1982), would include the following:

- Delivering corrective feedback following a response error and reinforcement following an appropriate response.
- Giving specific rather than general feedback whenever possible.
- Using a variety of praise and correction statements in order to increase the credibility of each statement.
- Delivering corrections without being completely negative toward the student's response.
- Acknowledging effort as well as achievement in order to increase the learner's independence.
- Focusing student attention on the behavior(s) that lead to success.
- Individualizing feedback so that the student evaluates achievement in terms of his or her own performance.
- Focusing the student's attention on which behaviors need to be altered and how best to change them to achieve success.

For an excellent review of effective instructional practices in special education, the reader is encouraged to read Englert, Tarrant, and Mariage (1992). In addition to defining the factors related to "good teaching" within the field, the authors present observation checklists that can easily be used for the training and supervision of effective special education teachers.

### Instructional Goals and Objectives

The direct result of effective instruction is an increase in student success rates. Within special education programs, statements of goals and objectives are fundamental. Beyond the Individualized Education Program process, goals and objectives should be used on a regular basis to establish instructional parameters and assist in the evaluation of student progress. Teachers and administrators need to understand what criteria are appropriate for the prescribed content. Skill mastery, which implies 100% achievement, is a desired, but not essential, goal for all basic skills. Special education teachers have long known that students need to achieve a high enough response rate to allow for independence and to move to more difficult material.

In basic skills, taught mainly in elementary and middle school grades, 90% to 95% criterion levels will be acceptable and attainable for most learners. In nonbasic skills such as those taught in many secondary courses, criterion levels of 70% to 80% are acceptable as long as the student is able to demonstrate knowledge of the key concepts or skill sequences. When special education students repeatedly produce work at levels below these recommended percentages, it should be assumed that the problem is an instructional one rather than an inherent student learning problem. When instruction and its associated activities are developed at the correct level for the individual student, learning rates will be within an acceptable range. Therefore, no student who is putting forth effort should consistently have to face papers that evidence failure.

## A Model for Effective Instructional Design

In an effective instructional design, the teacher manages both the time and the experiences of the student in such a way that the student's interactions with the materials, the teacher, and instructional routines lead to learning gains. Although the teaching-learning cycle is a complex set of interactions when viewed across lessons, units, and time, instructional design can be seen more simply through the structuring of a single lesson. Table 1 presents the key elements of a lesson presentation and their significance for learners with special needs. For these students who easily lose attention, content, and motivation, each component of the lesson structure needs to be executed carefully.

**TABLE 1. Lesson Structure**

| Lesson Phase | Instructional Components | Significance for Learners With Special Needs |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Structuring | Lesson purpose<br>Lesson objectives<br>Review<br>Lesson rules | Establishes a rationale for learning<br>Links new learning to old<br>Creates expectations for success and appropriate behavior |
| 2. Presentation and practice | Demonstration<br>Multiple examples<br>Rehearsal<br>Precueing and prequestioning<br>Error drill<br>Guided practice<br>Feedback | Establishes critical features to be learned<br>Allows for practice without failure<br>Results in higher level of retention |
| 3. Closure | Firm-up<br>Transition | Leads to greater retention<br>Establishes expectations for next activity |
| 4. Application | Independent practice | Creates learning independence |

*Source:* *Cohen, S. B. (1986). Teaching new material. Teaching Exceptional Children, 19 (1), 50. Adapted by permission.*

## 2. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNER, THE TASK, AND THE PRESENTATION THAT IMPACTS ON INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS?

Students with special needs are first learners and then students with specific learning difficulties. Thus, instruction for such students begins with a thorough awareness of learning principles along with knowledge of student learning characteristics. Student variables are then viewed within the relationship of the task and the instructional routine.

### The Learner

Although students with special needs share many common learning characteristics with their typical peers, they also bring some unique traits to the instructional setting. Teachers know that these students present individual difficulties and that they need to consider each student within the context of the classroom. However, it is useful to acknowledge certain learning traits that are prevalent across large numbers of learners with problems. The list that follows contains many of the common learning characteristics shared by such learners in academic situations, These learners

- Are poor at incidental learning.
- Have attention difficulties.
- Learn best using concrete material.
- Learn meaningful material more easily than unrelated material.
- Are poor in organization and study skills.
- Experience reading difficulties.
- Are more externally than internally oriented.
- Seem to be unmotivated.
- Have deficits in metacognitive skills (e.g., focusing, classifying, predicting, and self-monitoring).
- Have poor memory skills.
- Have poor self-concept.
- Lack the ability to develop effective strategies.
- Are inflexible.
- Often have perceptual problems.

A student's learning characteristics will have implications for instructional procedures, as is shown in the following example:

- Learning Characteristic: Poor incidental learner; does not "pickup" on subtle, non-direct statements.

- Instructional Procedure: Give explicit statements for information and correction purposes.

Learning Principles and Instructional Principles. Learning principles represent well-accepted "truths" about the procedures, types, and conditions of learning. Learning principles are the foundation of all effective instruction; they allow educators to generalize across individuals to large groups of students. For each learning principle, there is a corresponding instructional principle that relates to teaching procedures. Instructional principles frame teaching within predictable and successful methods. When viewed together, along with an understanding of how students with special needs learn, they can help the teacher plan instruction that will achieve the objectives of the curriculum.

The following example illustrates this direct relationship between learning and instructional principles:

- Learning Principle: Corrective feedback reduces student errors on future responses.

- Instructional Principle: When a student makes an error, provide feedback as to the correct response or information on how to make the correction.

**The Task**

In cases in which the curriculum tasks or activities do not match the student's learning skills, academic failure results. This unfortunately occurs not due to the student's learning problems, but rather as a result of inappropriately provided instruction. Many learners with special needs are repeatedly confronted by papers that are marked with a high number of errors and are given grades of only 30%, 50%, or 60%. From the point of view of effective instruction, such papers should not exist, because they represent tasks that are inappropriate for the learner's skill level and should not have been presented in the first place. Independent practice should be required only on material that can be accomplished at or above an instructional level of approximately 80% accuracy.

Structuring tasks is important for the success of learners with special needs. Elements that relate to this structuring include the following:

- Functionality (relevance to the student's environment).
- Active participation.
- Relationship of the task to the evaluation procedure.
- The response mode (variations from paper-and-pencil tasks).
- The time frame for completion.
- The skill level required by the material.
- The student's mastery of task prerequisites.

## The Presentation

As discussed earlier with regard to lesson structure, the presentation of a lesson has several components that lend themselves to instructional analysis. Effective teachers understand that their manner of presentation can be a significant variable in determining whether or not learners with special needs are successful in the curriculum.

All lesson presentations begin with gaining student attention. For the student with an attention deficit problem, this component is essential. Attention may be gained by use of verbal cues (e.g., "All eyes on me") or nonverbal cues (e.g., silently waiting in the front of the room until everyone attends). Stating the expectations for behavior at the beginning of each lesson allows the learners to review rules and relate their behavior to the lesson demands. This is important with learners who have special needs because of their difficulty in generalizing behavior and understanding the relationship between behavior and consequences.

Advance organizers also have been found to be effective for focusing learners on the content to be learned. The use of advance organizers lets the student establish expectations, relate old learning to new, and focus on key concepts. In addition, advance organizers may require that the student develop predictions about the lessons that rely on the activation of previous knowledge or experiences.

The body of the presentation can be most effective for learners with special needs when the teacher (a) uses appropriate demonstrations that allow the student to see a correct model; (b) prompts the student's use of the correct response; and (c) provides practice for mastery.

Comprehension checks and evaluation and feedback procedures establish the success of the lesson and allow the teacher to plan for modifications and the subsequent lessons.

## 3. WHAT COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL VARIABLES ARE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

Teachers and administrators should be aware of specific components that are important for all learners. The specific characteristics of learners with special needs heighten the relevance of such teaching variables as motivation, individualization, sequencing, generalization, and instructional modification.

### Motivation

Students with learning problems commonly view school and school-related activities as irrelevant. They are frequently unable to process educational tasks due to a limited experience and knowledge base. When carried across the years, a student's lack of achievement and cumulative frustration with curriculum materials produce a noticeable lack of motivation. Extreme motivation problems are evident when a student puts more energy into attempts to avoid failure rather than into attempts to succeed. According to Clark and Starr (1986), "One's level of aspiration is generally a compromise between one's fear of failure and one's hope for success." Taking this a step further, it is clear that the effort students put forth on school tasks is based on their expectations of either success or failure on a task and their perceptions of whether or not task completion is valued and will be rewarded (Meier, 1992).

Many learners with special needs perceive that schools and teachers do not value their efforts and achievements, and as a result they often establish expectations for themselves that are either falsely high or ridiculously low. Teachers can help these students understand that they need to "1) view the task as one that can be accomplished but that is also age and content appropriate; 2) see achievement in alignment with expended effort (i.e., assignments should be challenging but manageable); and 3) recognize the task as meaningful and therefore worthy of participation" (Cohen & deBettencourt, 1991, p. 267).

Significant factors related to motivation include (a) an understanding of the activity's purpose (meaningfulness); (b) the choices the student has in carrying out the task; and (c) the student's self-esteem. A student with learning problems needs to discern that the critical lesson tasks relate to the expected outcomes of school and that learning is a personally functional activity that can lead to success and control over one's future.

A teacher can contribute to the student's understanding of the task's purpose by having the student respond to questions such as the following:

- Do I know what I am being asked to do?
- Do I know how to use this information (skill or concept)?
- Do I know why or when I need to apply this information?

Choices motivate all of us by allowing us to feel in control of our activities. The student who has repeatedly failed tends to feel disengaged, rather than empowered, in school situations. Choices relate to empowerment and increase the student's sense of a personalized environment. Opportunities for choices within instructional tasks are numerous; they include: (a) scheduling choices related to when to perform certain activities during the day; (b) the location of an activity; (c) selection of reinforcers; (d) format variety related to independent or group tasks; and (e) preferred output mode (i.e., how to demonstrate acquired knowledge).

Many teachers who work with students with special needs quickly become aware of the poor self-concepts that these students hold. Their self-expectation is all too often for failure rather than success. Self-concept is so closely related to achievement that as one decreases or increases so does the other. The problem is compounded by these students' inability to attribute success or failure to their effort or skill. Unfortunately, they transfer the failure set from one classroom situation to another. Students with learning problems are likely to confuse effort with performance outcomes and experience a decrease in their self-esteem with each unsuccessful academic attempt.

Four variables that influence motivation and help promote self-esteem learning situations are (1) knowledge of performance results; (2) alignment of material to the interest of the learner; (3) relevance of the activity in relation to the reward; and (4) perception of success as being in line with effort. Reviewing these four variables in relation to the learning characteristics of learners with special needs, it becomes evident that the task of motivating these students is a difficult one. Teachers need to keep the following considerations in mind:

- Many problem learners are unable to recognize subtle forms of feedback; therefore performance results need to be made explicit.
- The background and interests of the student, which may be very different from those of the teacher or the rest of the class, need to be acknowledged.
- The student needs to value the reward in order to seek to attain it and recognize that it is worthy of the task.
- Success results from a combination of ability and effort.

**Individualized Instruction**

Individualization is such a basic tenet of special education that it is often used to characterize the field and distinguish it from the general education orientation. Although individualized instruction is commonly advocated, its effective implementation has proved to be difficult for many teachers. Individualized instruction occurs when a teacher plans for the individual student by attempting to match the student, the task, and the instructional intervention in such a way as to elicit a high percentage of appropriate responses from the student (Bos & Vaughn, 1991; Cohen & Lynch, in press; Mercer & Mercer, 1989). Individualized instruction consists of the philosophy of individualization, the strategies that comprise individualized methods of instruction, and the techniques that enhance the effects of teaching for the individual student (Cohen & Lynch, in press).

Philosophy. The philosophical orientation of the school (as expressed in the curriculum), the teacher, and the student set the tone for how individualization is actually carried out. In recognition of the specific needs of the special learner, many schools allow the special education curriculum to be driven by the characteristics of, and the objectives established for, the student. As such, the curriculum is rooted in

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general education goals that are reshaped to fit the individual needs of the student. (Chapter 6 offers a fuller explanation of curriculum development and modification.) As the person responsible for curriculum and instructional implementation, the teacher's philosophy is critical. The teacher has successfully met the mandates of individualized instruction when a student's designated goals are achieved. To do this, the teacher must incorporate instructional principles such as developmental sequences, systematic assessment, reinforcement, corrective feedback, instructional pacing, and motivation along with a well-established repertoire of instructional methods.

The student will most likely perceive instruction to be individualized if it is success oriented, challenging, and personally meaningful. As students develop a sense of their own needs, their satisfaction with school and curriculum may result from a recognition that the instructional approaches, achievement levels, and personal relationships are tailored for them.

Strategies. The individualized instruction philosophy is set forth in instructional procedures aimed at producing higher level achievement for students with special needs. Strategies for individualization are planned methods designed to address the needs of specific students. There are a number of methods that incorporate the concept of individualization, but the foundational variables that can be altered should be considered first. Conceptualized as the underlying **"CARPET"** of individualization, the acronym stands for variables that can readily be modified to match the needs of the specific student:

**C** - Content or task to be learned
**A** - Actions of the teacher for presentation
**R** - Reinforcement or correction
**P** - Performance criteria
**E** - Environment and grouping
**T** - Time allotment and rate (Cohen & Lynch, in press)

In addition to the multiple alterations that can be made as a result of reviewing lesson plans according to the CARPET strategy, several specific methods that are appropriate for individualized instruction are behavioral contracts, peer tutoring, learning packets, and cooperative learning.

Enhancers. Somewhat different from individualized strategies are instructional techniques that can be altered easily and quickly to accommodate student differences throughout a teaching sequence. Enhancers take little or no preplanning, yet they are consistently evident in the teaching routines of effective teachers. Basic examples of enhancing techniques are feedback formats, questioning strategies, and motivational strategies. By adjusting these and other teaching elements, teachers are able to modify their ongoing instruction to accommodate individual needs. For instance, a teacher may ask an open-ended question to a more advanced student but use a multiple-choice question for a student with less comprehension ability.

## Sequencing Instruction

As an important instructional variable, teachers must view sequencing from two perspectives. First, when skills and concepts are taught directly, teachers should be aware of the sequence in which they present the material. A basic assumption, but one particularly worth emphasizing for learners with special needs, is that all preskills must be taught prior to the introduction of a new task. Unless the preskills have been acquired at a high enough level to allow the student to use them in future tasks, the chances of succeeding on the new skill are minimal. Other significant guidelines for developing appropriate sequences are as follows:

- Complexity: Simple material is taught before complex material, easy skills before difficult ones.

- Frequency: High-utility skills and items are taught prior to ones of less usefulness.

- Building new skills on old ones: Skills that have a common relationship, such as word families, may be sequenced together.

- Building an operation: Certain nondevelopmental tasks must be demonstrated in a specific sequence or chain of skills, such as in writing the letters of a name.

- Skill proximity: Skills or concepts that are similar may be taught together; however, this should be done with caution, because many similar skills are easily confused by students with learning problems and therefore, should be separated. Separation occurs when the teacher teaches nonsimilar information to criterion level in between the teaching of the two closely related elements. Thus, letter recognition, "b" and "d" would be taught with several letters separating them.

The second way of viewing sequencing is in the requirements of the responses that students are asked to make. A developmental task sequence to demonstrate knowledge reflects an increasingly higher level of understanding and requires an increasingly difficult response. The progression of responses is as follows:

- Matching.
- Discrimination (recognizing).
- Labeling (identifying).
- Copying (imitating).
- Responding with prompting.
- Responding without prompting.
- Application (self-generation of response).

### Generalization

Many learners with special needs have difficulty transferring a concept or skill across settings, materials, or other differing variables. Therefore, it is important to teach explicitly for generalization of learning. The following four stages of generalization have been identified and are useful in planning for transfer to occur

1. Orientation shows how the skill can be generalized by brainstorming the possible situations in which the skill may be used.

2. Activation requires that the student be prompted to use the skill in other settings or under different conditions.

3. Adaptation allows the student to modify the skill for appropriate personal use.

4. Maintenance takes place through the promotion of long-term use of the skill across times and settings.

Specific strategies that promote the generalization of skills include changing (a) reinforcement; (b) cues; (c) materials; (d) response set; (e) some dimension(s) of the stimulus; (f) setting(s); and (g) teachers (Bos & Vaughn, 1991).

### Instructional Modification

Although they are recognized as a heterogenous group, students with learning problems do share one thing in common: ineffective or inefficient learning that results in frequent failure. The impact of specially designed instruction lies in using modifications that can be applied to instruction for these learners, ranging from simply shortening an assignment to the more complex procedures involved in reshaping instructional presentations. Appendix A includes a list of instructional modifications that can easily be perused and used to match particular instructional problems. Teachers and principals need to focus on both the process of developing and implementing modifications and the specific modifications themselves.

The process of instructional modification includes the following steps:

1. Deciding on the factors the teacher can control.

2. Developing an accurate problem statement.

3. Reviewing all possible solutions.

4. Selecting an appropriate modification or modification set.

5. Implementing the modification.

6. Evaluating modification effectiveness. (For a detailed explanation of the instructional modification process, see Cohen & Lynch, in press.)

Effective modifications match clearly stated needs. Unless the teacher is able to determine the specific problem, modification success will rely more on chance occurrence than on direct teaching strategies. The selection of a modification is based on the problem statement and on the teacher's familiarity with a wide range of instructional options.

## 4. WHAT INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES HAVE PROVED TO BE ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE WITH STUDENTS WITH LEARNING PROBLEMS?

Students who have persistent learning problems are the reason why many special education programs have focused on alternative approaches to instruction. Instructional approaches that have been frequently researched and proved effective for learners with special needs includes (a) task analysis, (b) direct instruction, (c) learning strategies; and (d) curriculum-based assessment. Common to all of these methods is an emphasis on structure and direct application of instructional principles. Each approach aims at reducing specific known learning difficulties typically found among groups of students with learning problems.

### Task Analysis

Task analysis is a means of breaking a task down into its component subparts and arranging those subparts in an order that will lead to the completion of the task. The use of task analysis is particularly important in teaching students with learning problems because they often fail on material in the general education curriculum that has been presented in broad sets of multiple subskills. Task analysis begins with the establishment of an objective that defines the terminal task to be completed. This is followed by a delineation of the prerequisites (i.e., skills that must be mastered prior to beginning the task) that act as the entry skills necessary for the task.

The component steps of task analysis are accomplished in the following sequence: (1) subdividing a skill into its component parts; (2) sequencing the series of subskills in a logical order; and (3) describing each subskill so that it may be reproduced in form by the learner. Subskills are the steps that need to be mastered as the learner progresses toward the terminal skill. These component skills are presented either sequentially or in parallel order, depending on the relationship of the subskill to the other components of the task analysis. (Refer back to the section on sequencing for further explanation.) The number of component steps in the task analysis will depend on the needs of the student population. For students with learning problems, the teacher will most likely need to break down subskills into smaller, more easily accomplished steps.

The following guide frames the development of task analyses for common learning skills:

- Definition of the task (terminal objective):

  What is the behavior you want to teach?

- Prerequisites for the task:

  What entry behaviors are necessary to complete the task successfully?

- Task analysis (subcomponents):

  (1) What subtasks are necessary to achieve the goal?
  (2) What is the sequential order of the subtasks?
  (3) Is there a parallel (nondevelopmental) order to the subtasks?
  (4) Can the subtasks be subdivided into smaller units?

The strategies used to teach the subcomponents of the task analysis are dictated by the particulars of the component. Different subcomponent skills will require different strategies, some more complex than others. Appendix B contains a sample task analysis and related instructional sequence for teaching check writing in a functional mathematics class.

Task analysis is commonly used to restructure curriculum requirements from general education so that the tasks are taught in more manageable steps for students with learning problems. In instructional teaming situations with general and special educators, task analysis provides a way to adjust the material to meet the needs of a broader student population. Students are instructed only on the steps of the task analysis in which they are deficient, thereby reducing redundant instruction for the advanced learner or insufficient instruction for the slower student.

The difficulty for many teachers is identifying the prerequisites and the subcomponents of the task analysis. Two ways that many teachers practice task analysis are to (1) perform the task several times, noting every step performed prior to task completion and (2) proceed backwards from the terminal objective through the subcomponent skills to the prerequisite skills.

**Direct Instruction**

Direct instruction (DI), which is based on effective teaching and shares many of the same behavioral principles, presents a structured curriculum taught through highly specified instructional procedures. Although several successful curriculum series have been created using the DI model (see Appendix C for a list of direct instruction programs), it is not necessary to use these programs to instigate direct instruction procedures. The principles advocated by DI are designed for teaching explicit skills. They were first developed around a series of language lessons in Project Head Start and Project Follow-Through (Engelmann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988). Conceived as well-sequenced, explicit tasks, DI focuses on small groups of children working in brisk-paced, repetitive routines that require high levels of participation and teacher-student interaction.

Direct instruction uses a task-analytic approach to curriculum development and presents skills and concepts in a sequential and logical fashion. As can be seen from the example that follows, DI focuses on teaching basic academic skills as prerequisites to higher-order thinking skills. The lesson is designed so that all learners can participate, understand the concepts, and receive sufficient practice and feedback prior to practicing the material independently.

**TASK 6 Story Problems: Working Addition and Multiplication Problems**

**A.** Problem B:
There are 5 green flowers, 4 red flowers, and 2 blue flowers in bloom. How many flowers are there in all?
**B.** Is that a multiplication problem? (Signal.) **No.** Right. The same number is not used again and again. So what kind of problem is it? (Signal.) **Addition.**
**C.** Say the addition problem. (Signal.) **5 plus 4 plus 2.**
**D.** Write the problem and figure the answer. (Check.)
**E.** What's the answer? (Signal.) **11.** Write 11 in the box. (Check.)
**F.** Read the story problem and find the word that 11 tells about. (Pause.)
**G.** What word does 11 tell about? (Signal.) **Flowers.**
**H.** Write it on the line. (Check.)
**I.** Read the answer to problem B. (Signal) **11 flowers.** (Corrective Mathematics Multiplication, Lesson 23, Task 6)

The signals referred to in this example are visual and/or verbal cues that are used to guide unison responding among all members of the group. Unison responding is used frequently in DI as a way to ensure that all children have multiple opportunities to participate and receive feedback concerning their responses. The signal is a management tool that guides the participants in producing their responses together so that no one or two individual children can dominate the responses of others. Individual responding is used to confirm student understanding during teacher-directed lessons.

All lessons are taught through a series of tasks that are presented in structured formats. Each task may be presented in a different format; however, the fast-paced, repetitive nature of the explicit teaching is always present. The basic approach is teach-model-test-feedback, and written scripts present the specific wording for teachers to follow for each component. Formats are designed according to the type of content being taught, in a manner similar to that suggested in the section on presentation in Question 1 of this chapter.

Independent practice is always given as part of a basic DI lesson. Written activities are used to help reinforce student learning and provide additional opportunities for teacher feedback. Both new skill applications and previously taught skills are practiced in independent activities. The lesson goal is mastery learning at an appropriate criterion level. Independent student practice occurs only after the response of the group is firm and the teacher is sure that individual responses have a high proportion of accuracy.

Although direct instruction is a very structured program that takes some initial training to use correctly, it is well established as a successful approach for learners with special needs. The research on DI shows that students with learning problems benefit from the small, explicit steps and the numerous opportunities for participation, which ensure high levels of feedback. Whether commercial DI programs are initiated or teachers use the methodology in their own curricula, DI works and should be encouraged as a prominent teaching approach for learners with special needs.

### Learning Strategies

The field of special education has increasingly moved in the direction of teaching students how to learn. It involves procedural and conditional knowledge as well as declarative knowledge. The attempt is to diminish the student's dependence on having to learn each and every instructional item as a separate, explicit skill. Problem solutions, in the form of learning strategies, allow students to employ implicit skills or processes. Strategies are plans, behavioral steps, and processes that are designed to accomplish a learning or problem-solving task. Instruction in the use and generalization of strategies helps learners with special needs become more active and responsible in the learning process and fosters the use of metacognitive skills in which these students may previously have been deficient.

Strategy instruction begins with an analysis of the task (problem) and progresses through the identification of the strategy steps to solve the problem, teaching of the strategy, inclusion of metacognitive skills to guide the use of the strategy, and feedback and evaluation procedures that will lead to application and generalization. Interestingly, although most learners develop strategies independently, students with learning problems frequently do not. In cases where learners with special needs develop their own strategies, they are either ineffective or are not used appropriately.

Like task analysis, strategies develop a systematic procedure for performing a task or problem set. In fact, task-specific strategies are designed to promote the completion of educational tasks through the application of a sequenced set of limited rules and preskills. Cognitive behavior modification strategies include the performance of task steps along with self-instructional statements that allow the learner to guide the task. In metacognitive strategies, the learner is taught to be aware of and regulate his or her own thought processes, such as planning performance steps or monitoring errors. Table 2 illustrates each type of strategy.

Strategies may be developed by the learner, by the teacher, or through an interaction of the teacher and the student. Three ways to develop new strategies that have been developed by Deshler and his associates (1986) at the University of Kansas are as follows:

- Observe someone who successfully and systematically performs the task and determine the strategy that person applies.

- Ask the students to describe exactly what they do to perform a task, concentrating on the difficult elements of the task in order to develop an orderly procedure for performing the task. Be sure that all necessary elements are included.

- Create an original strategy by

    (1) Doing several items in the task class, being aware of the required actions.
    (2) Using self-questions such as "What do I need to do to complete this task?"
    (3) Devising the steps for reaching the solution.
    (4) Labeling your system and, when possible, using an acronym or mnemonic device to label the steps.
    (5) Analyzing the preskills required for the strategy (Deshler, 1986).

Strategies that are developed for a student need to be taught so that the student recognizes their relevance, is able to use them independently, and knows when to apply them in a variety of situations. Prior to teaching a strategy, the teacher should be sure that the student has the preskills necessary to perform all components of the task. Research on strategy instruction at the University of Kansas has resulted in an effective teaching routine geared to the needs of learners with special needs. This routine, which is described below, has become widely accepted in special education programs.

- Pretest and obtain a commitment to learn the strategy. Analyze the student's current ineffective strategies in order to show a need for change and a plan for improvement.

- Describe the strategy steps and show when the strategy could be used.

TABLE 2. Examples of Learning Strategies

| Strategy Name | Procedure |
|---|---|
| YES<br>(goal affirmation) | Y - Yes goals are important. |
| | E - I'm eager to make a change. |
| | S - I'm ready to start the process of change (Andrews, 1992). |
| SEARCH<br>(solving word search puzzles) | S - Say the word. |
| | E - Enclose the unique letter(s) within the word that set a special pattern. |
| | A - Ask what letters are next to the unique letter(s). |
| | R - Review the word search for the unique letter(s). |
| | C - Check to see whether it is the word and circle it. |
| | H - Hide the word on the word list. |
| WHIPS<br>(learning unknown words in isolation) | W - Write the unknown word on both sides of the index card. |
| | H - Ask someone to read the word so you can hear it said. |
| | I - Illustrate the word with a line drawing on one side. |
| | P - Practice reading the word while looking at the line drawing (3-5 practices). |
| | S - Switch to the side without the drawing and read the word. |
| FIST<br>(reading comprehension strategy) | F - Read the First sentence in the paragraph. |
| | I - Indicate a question based on information in the first sentence. |
| | S - Search for the answer to the question. |
| | T - Tie the answer to the question with a paraphrase (Ellis & Lenz, 1987). |

- Model the strategy. Use a "thinking aloud" procedure to demonstrate the steps.

- Have the student memorize the strategy. Have the student verbally rehearse the steps until rote learning is evident.

- Use controlled practice. Have the student practice on easy material while receiving immediate feedback.

- Provide opportunities for grade-appropriate practice. Offer feedback on class material until mastery of the strategy is achieved.

- Assess student progress. Make the student aware of the progress that results from use of the strategy.

- Teach the student to generalize the strategy. Discuss other uses for the strategy, adaptations, and cues that would help the student remember to apply the steps (Ellis & Lenz, 1987).

Strategies have proved to be effective for teaching metacognitive skills, social skills, and academic skills. The professional journals and other materials in the field of special education are now infused with strategies that have been researched for students with learning problems. Teachers can find support for the use of strategies in almost any area of the curriculum.

Strategies that teachers develop for specific students or that teachers help students develop themselves may be accepted more easily because of their direct relevance to the situation. However, there are many existing strategies that may be useful and may be generalizable to a variety of situations. The reader is referred to Archer and Gleason (1989), Ellis and Lenz (1987), Deshler and Schumaker (1986), and Harris (1982).

Strategy instruction, which is prominent in areas such as reading, written expression, and mathematics, has also been successfully applied to the development of curriculum programs in the area of study skills. Students with learning problems often lack the necessary internalized strategies that enable them to receive, organize, retain, and recall information. Although it is now common to provide study skills programs for students with learning problems in middle and secondary schools, many of the strategies can be easily modified and introduced early in the elementary grades. The following are some of the particular characteristics of students who are deficient in study skills:

- They think of themselves as poor in reading ability.
- They lack retention.

- They have an inability to focus.
- They have a tendency to give equal stress to every word and concept.
- They tend to procrastinate and cram.
- Reading causes them nervousness, restlessness, and fatigue.
- They are unable to perceive organization.
- They cannot manipulate information effectively.
- They lack appreciation for the study task (Alley & Deshler, 1979).

Study skill strategies assist in organizing time, materials, and responses so that students with learning problems can acquire and apply information more appropriately. Examples of common strategies include (a) the use of graphic organizers for common text structures; (b) assignment schedule sheets that assist in planning and developing assignments as well as in guiding their on-time submission; (c) use of text modifications and study guides; (d) rehearsal and association strategies that assist in the organization of material for later recall; and (e) test-taking strategies for approaching testing situations more successfully. More detailed explanations of study skill strategies can be found in Bos and Vaughn (1991), Ellis and Lenz (1987), and Scruggs and Mastropieri (1988).

## Curriculum-Based Assessment

In order to make appropriate modifications, teachers must place emphasis on instructional decisions that result from observations of student performance. Direct and frequent performance measurement best indicates program effectiveness. Known as curriculum-based assessment (CBA), this systematic form of measurement

- Focuses on specific behavior.
- Emphasizes functional aspects of assessment.
- Is independent of any one instructional methodology.
- Views a lack of progress as a program failure rather than a student failure.
- Evaluates instructional effectiveness.
- Guides instructional/programmatic changes.

Curriculum-based assessment is an objective system of measuring student progress in relation to the school curriculum as expressed in classroom materials. After performance data are systematically gathered, trends are analyzed and instructional decisions are made based on the information.

To use curriculum-based assessment, a teacher must first select specific and observable behaviors that represent a task class of behavior important to the student's achievement. Sample task classes include CVC words, proper names, long division, paragraph writing, multiplication with percents, and capitalization. Knowledge of how to perform the task on some items in the task class will lead to successfully completing all items in the task class.

Teacher-constructed test procedures are then identified using sample items from the task class. Referred to as probes, these procedures take less than 3 minutes to administer and score, which allows for frequent administration (as often as two or more times per week is not uncommon). The frequency with which probes are used makes it desirable to have parallel forms that can be administered throughout the assessment period. The results of the probes are recorded and graphed in order to provide meaningful interpretations of the data. An example of a probe is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

**Probe Example**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Title | Decoding: Identification of Short Vowel Sounds | | | |
| Directions | Read each word and circle the words that have a short vowel sound. | | | |
| Items | cake | tell | bold | time |
| | hat | send | sale | came |
| | we | man | date | fun |

When using curriculum-based assessment procedures, it is important to establish an achievement goal against which all probe results are compared. This goal line represents the predicted level and date of achievement. On the graph, the line is drawn from the baseline data to the anticipated criterion level at the last assessment point. Student performance on the sequence of probes is then reviewed as to whether the goal line measure can be reached. Instruction is altered according to the progress in achieving the goal line. Appendix D shows a graphed example of a CBA for decoding along with the established goal line.

Curriculum-Based Measurement. As a subset of CBA, curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is rooted in all the same principles. However, CBM uses specific probe designs created by Deno and colleagues at the University of Minnesota. Although each probe contains material that is used directly in the classroom, the procedure is structured in order to ensure reliability. For additional information on CBM procedures for reading, spelling, mathematics, and writing, refer to Deno (1985) and Fuchs, Fuchs, and Hamlett (1990).

Whether a teacher uses curriculum-based assessment or curriculum-based measurement, the important thing is the consistent collection of performance data that are used to make instructional decisions. The goal is instructional change leading to increases in effectiveness. Curriculum-based assessment techniques rely on ongoing performance data and, as a result, provide a measure sensitive to the frequently slow progress of students with special needs.

## 5. HOW DOES AN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE DISABILITIES DIFFER FROM ONE FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD LEARNING DIFFICULTIES?

The instruction of students with more moderate and severe learning difficulties includes all of the basic principles and procedures followed in other special education programs. However, the level of difficulty these students exhibit requires that their instructional programs be more structured and more systematically executed.

Reviews of the literature on curriculum and methods for students with severe disabilities discuss techniques that are considered to be the field's best practices (Fox & Williams, 1992; Snell, 1988). Although the instructional concepts included in such best practice lists have significance for all learners, they are particularly relevant to the education of children with moderate or severe disabilities. Some key concepts are discussed in the following sections, while a more complete listing is found in Fox and Williams (1992).

### Teach Generalization of Skills

The transfer of specific learned skills from one setting or situation to another can be achieved by:

- Teaching skills considered relevant to a specific student within certain settings.
- Teaching skills that are determined to be useful in more than one setting.
- Reducing behaviors such as self-stimulation that compete with learning the targeted skill.
- Holding expectations for students to apply the learned skills.
- Teaching skills at a level that is efficient for real-life situations.
- Teaching skills in relevant settings to increase the likelihood that they will be applied in those settings.

Concepts relevant to generalization are ecological assessments (from which skills are selected according to need within specific settings) and the selection of functional skills that will have the greatest relevance to the learner.

### Provide for Age-Appropriate Skills and Learning Materials

Skills that are functional to the student will be retained longer and will allow the student to appear more typical in the view of others within the environment. Age-appropriate selections of skills and materials relate to chronological age and result in students with moderate and severe disabilities displaying behaviors that are more acceptable for their age group. For example, instruction in cooking and self-care should be done with actual utensils rather than toy reproductions. In addition, allowing for choices to be made by the student at appropriate times will increase the age appropriateness of reinforcers and help the student learn to make decisions.

### Provide For Community-Based Programming

The use of community sites and normalized school settings allow the student to practice skills in settings that will be appropriate and available as the student grows older. These environments make skills more meaningful and, because of their realistic nature, demand higher expectations for behavior.

### Allow For Partial Participation

Many important skills that will allow greater interaction and independence are too difficult for a student with moderate to severe disabilities to handle. In such cases, it may be necessary to modify the skill so that some reduced level of participation is achieved and the student is not totally dependent on others. Examples of when partial participation is appropriate are (a) for students with limited mobility or motor skills to participate in field activities; (b) for assistance in cooperative learning activities that increase language and social interaction; and (c) for use of prepared materials such as frozen food for independence in cooking.

### Provide Functional Academics

Functional skills are those that are of utility to the learner and increase the learner's chance of responding appropriately. The usefulness of a skill will depend on the settings the student is most frequently in and the requirements for functioning within the common routines of those settings. Many academic skills may have limited utility for students with more severe disabilities, but there are academic skills that can and should be examined for functional use. For instance, common sight and survival words may be important, as well as basic numeral recognition or communication skills.

### Integrate Instruction and Therapy into Natural Class Routines

Separating therapy and instructional routines makes it even more difficult to develop generalization of skills. Instead, students with moderate and severe disabilities should be taught communication, socialization, motor development, and academics at the relevant points in the class activity.

### Systematically Collect Data for Making Instructional Decisions

The slow rate of progress among this student population demands that teachers be able to delineate the performance of specific behaviors. To do this, it is necessary to collect performance data on a regular schedule and chart the information for an accurate interpretation. As in other curriculum-based assessment procedures, visual evidence of learning, or the lack thereof, should form the basis for instructional change.

### Perform a Functional Analysis of Maladaptive Behavior

The correct management of behavior problems of a student with severe disabilities includes (1) analysis of the skills the student is missing for appropriate behavior and (2) an understanding of the purposes the maladaptive behavior serves in the child's routines. This two-pronged approach will be more apt to result in behavioral change.

Within the past 5 years, many new references related to the education of students with severe disabilities have begun to frame programs for this student population. For more information, the administrator or teacher is referred to Ford, Schnorr, Meyer, Davern, Black, and Dempsey (1989); Meyer, Peck and Brown, (1991); Orelove and Sobsey, (1991); Snell, (in press); and Stainback and Stainback, (1992).

## SUMMARY

No educator sets out to let children fail, yet, when instruction is poorly aligned with the learning needs of the students, failure does occur. Effective instruction for special learners with special needs promotes the learning gains that have been established in the IEP for the individual child. This is done by infusing the instructional environment with techniques that represent the best application of research and theory. The administrator who advocates effective instruction must be sure that teachers are able to develop and manage lessons according to student learning characteristics and needs; maintain a high level of student involvement through active participation and meaningful tasks; ensure accurate responding from students; relate current instructional tasks to future needs of the student; and make learning both rewarding and enjoyable.

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# Appendix A

## Instructional Modification Menu

# Instructional Modification Menu

(Cohen and Lynch)

1. Provide study carrels.
2. Use room dividers.
3. Provide headsets to muffle noise.
4. Seat child away from doors/windows.
5. Seat near model (student or teacher).
6. Provide time-out area.
7. Rearrange student groups (according to instructional needs, role models, etc.).
8. Group for cooperative learning.
9. Vary working surface (e.g., floor or vertical surface such as blackboards).
10. Simplify/shorten directions.
11. Give both oral and written directions.
12. Have student repeat directions.
13. Have student repeat lesson objective.
14. Ask frequent questions.
15. Change question level.
16. Change response format (e.g., from verbal to physical; from saying to pointing).
17. Provide sequential directions (label as first, second, etc.).
18. Use manipulatives.
19. Alter objective criterion level.
20. Provide functional tasks (relate to child's environment).
21. Reduce number of items on a task.
22. Highlight relevant words/features.
23. Use rebus (picture) directions.
24. Provide guided practice.
25. Provide more practice trials.
26. Increase allocated time.
27. Use a strategy approach.
28. Change reinforcers.
29. Increase reinforcement frequency.
30. Delay reinforcement.
31. Provide error drill.
32. Increase wait time.
33. Use firm-up activities.
34. Use specific rather than general praise.
35. Have a peer tutor program.
36. Provide frequent review.
37. Have student summarize at end of lesson.
38. Use self-correcting materials.
39. Adapt test items for differing response modes.
40. Provide mnemonic devices.
41. Provide tangible reinforcers.

42. Use behavioral contracts.
43. Establish routines for handing work in, heading papers, etc.
44. Use timers to show allocated time.
45. Teach self-monitoring.
46. Provide visual cues (e.g., posters, desktop number lines, etc.).
47. Block out extraneous stimuli on written material.
48. Tape record directions.
49. Tape record student responses.
50. Use a study guide.
51. Provide critical vocabulary list for content material.
52. Provide essential fact list.
53. Use clock faces to show classroom routine times.
54. Use dotted lines to line up math problems or show margins.
55. Use cloze procedure to test comprehension.
56. Provide transition directions.
57. Assign only one task at a time.
58. Provide discussion questions before reading.
59. Use word markers to guide reading.
60. Alter sequence of presentation.
61. Enlarge or highlight key words on test items.
62. Provide daily and weekly assignment sheets.
63. Post daily/weekly schedule.
64. Use graph paper for place value or when adding/subtracting two digit numbers.
65. Provide anticipation cues.
66. Establish rules and review frequently.
67. Teach key direction words.
68. Use distributed practice.
69. Provide pencil grips.
70. Tape paper to desk.
71. Shorten project assignment into daily tasks.
72. Segment directions.
73. Number (order) assignments to be completed.
74. Change far-point to near-point material for copying or review.
75. Put desk close to blackboard.
76. Incorporate currently popular themes/characters into assignments for motivation.
77. Repeat major points.
78. Use physical cues while speaking (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.).
79. Pause during speaking.
80. Use verbal cues (e.g., "Don't write this down", " This is important").
81. Change tone of voice, whisper, etc.
82. Use an honor system.
83. Collect notebooks weekly (periodically) to review student notes.
84. Reorganize tests to go from easy to hard.
85. Color code place value tasks.
86. Use self-teaching materials.

87. Do only odd/or even numbered items on a large task sheet.
88. Use a primary typewriter or large print to create written material.
89. Provide organizers (e.g., cartons/bins) for desk material.
90. Teach varied reading rates (e.g., scanning, skimming, etc.).
91. Provide content/lecture summaries.
92. Use peer-mediated strategies (e.g., "buddy system").
93. Call student's name before asking a question.
94. Use extra spaces between lines of print.
95. Use computer for writing tasks.
96. Color code materials/directions.
97. Use raised-line paper.
98. Provide calculators.
99. Circle math computation sign.
100. Use hand signals to cue behavior (e.g., attention, responding).
101. Establish a rationale for learning.
102. Use advance organizers.
103. Help students to develop their own learning strategies.
104. Ask oral multiple-choice questions.
105. Use peer checkers to review completed work.

# Appendix B

## Task Analysis Sample

## Task Analysis Sample

### Check Writing

Objective: The student will be able to complete a check and check record.

Prerequisites

1. Can write legibly.
2. Knows number words, dates, and arabic numerals.
3. Can subtract.

Task Analysis

1. Complete check.
   - Fill in date.
   - Fill in payee.
   - Fill in amount (arabic numerals).
   - Fill in amount (words).
   - Write signature.

2. Complete check record.
   - Enter check number.
   - Enter payee.
   - Enter amount.
   - Subtract from balance.
   - Enter new balance.

Teaching Sequence

1. Teacher provides student with a series of practice checks and check stubs.
2. Teacher explains parts of the check and has student name parts.
3. Teacher demonstrates filling out a check to Ace Hardware for $4.10 on September 3, 1979.
4. Student fills out a practice check following the teacher's model as the teacher restates each component.
5. Teacher asks student to fill out a check to John Smith for $12.21 on January 20, 1979. Teacher provides the student with selected check options.
6. Teacher asks student to fill out a check to Susan Snell for $3.40 on February 10, 1979. Provide student with selected options.
7. Teacher asks student to complete a check to Pat Harris for $6.30 on March 15, 1979.
8. Teacher explains parts of check record and has student name parts.

9. Teacher demonstrates completing check record for steps 3 and 4.
10. Student completes check record following teacher's model as teacher restates each component.
11. Teacher asks student to complete check record for step 5, selecting from options.
12. Teacher asks student to complete check record for step 6, selecting from options.
13. Teacher asks student to complete check record for step 7.

# Appendix C

## Examples of Direct Instruction Programs

## Examples of Direct Instruction Programs

**READING PROGRAMS**

| Program | Population/Application |
|---|---|
| Reading Mastery I-VI | Preschool and primary-intermediate students who read at 6.0 grade level<br>Developmental/remedial |
| Corrective Reading: Decoding A (Word-Attack Basics) | Third grade--adult<br>Remedial |
| Corrective Reading: Decoding B1, B2 (Decoding Strategies) | Fourth grade--adult<br>Remedial |
| Corrective Reading: Decoding C (Skill Applications) | Fourth grade--adult<br>Remedial |
| Corrective Reading: Comprehension A (Thinking Basics) | Fourth grade--adult<br>Remedial/developmental |
| Corrective Reading Comprehension B1, B2 (Comprehension Skills) | Fourth grade--adult<br>Remedial/developmental |
| Corrective Reading: Comprehension C (Concept Applications) | Fourth grade--adult<br>Remedial/developmental |
| Your World of Facts: A Memory Development Program | Grades 3-6<br>Older students/ supplemental |
| Capture the Meaning: Strategies for Comprehension | Grades 3-6<br>Older students with special needs<br>Supplemental/remedial |
| Reading Tutorial Series | Grades 1-12, Adult<br>Supplemental/remedial |

## LANGUAGE AND SPELLING PROGRAMS

| Program | Population/Application | Program | Population/Application |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Distar Language I, II, III**<br>instruction | Preschool and primary<br>Developmental/remedial | **Cursive Writing Program** | Grades 3-4 and older students who need cursive writing<br>Developmental/remedial |
| **Expressive Writing I/II** | Grades 4-6 and older students with special needs<br>Developmental/remedial | **Spelling Mastery: Levels A, B, C, D, E, F** | First-grade through sixth-grade or older students<br>Developmental/remedial |
| **Basic Writing Skills: Sentence Development** | Grades 4-8 and older students with special needs<br>Remedial | **Corrective Spelling Through Morphographs** | Seventh-grade students --adult<br>Remedial |
| **Basic Writing Skills: Capitalization and Punctuation** | Grades 7-12<br>Remedial | **Speed Spelling 1 and 2** | Grades 2-Junior high<br>Tutorial/remedial |

## MATHEMATICS PROGRAMS

| Program | Population/Application | Program | Population/Application |
|---|---|---|---|
| Distar Arithmetic I/II | Preschool and primary<br>Developmental/remedial | Math Tutorial Series | Grades 1-12<br>Tutorial/remedial |
| Corrective Mathematics: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division | Grades 3-12<br>Remedial | Remarkable Math Computation, Word Problems, Money | Grades 1-4<br>Older students with special needs<br>Developmental/remedial<br>Supplemental/remedial |
| Mathematics Modules: Basic Fractions, Decimals, Percents, Ratios, Equations | Grades 4-12<br>Remedial/developmental | | |

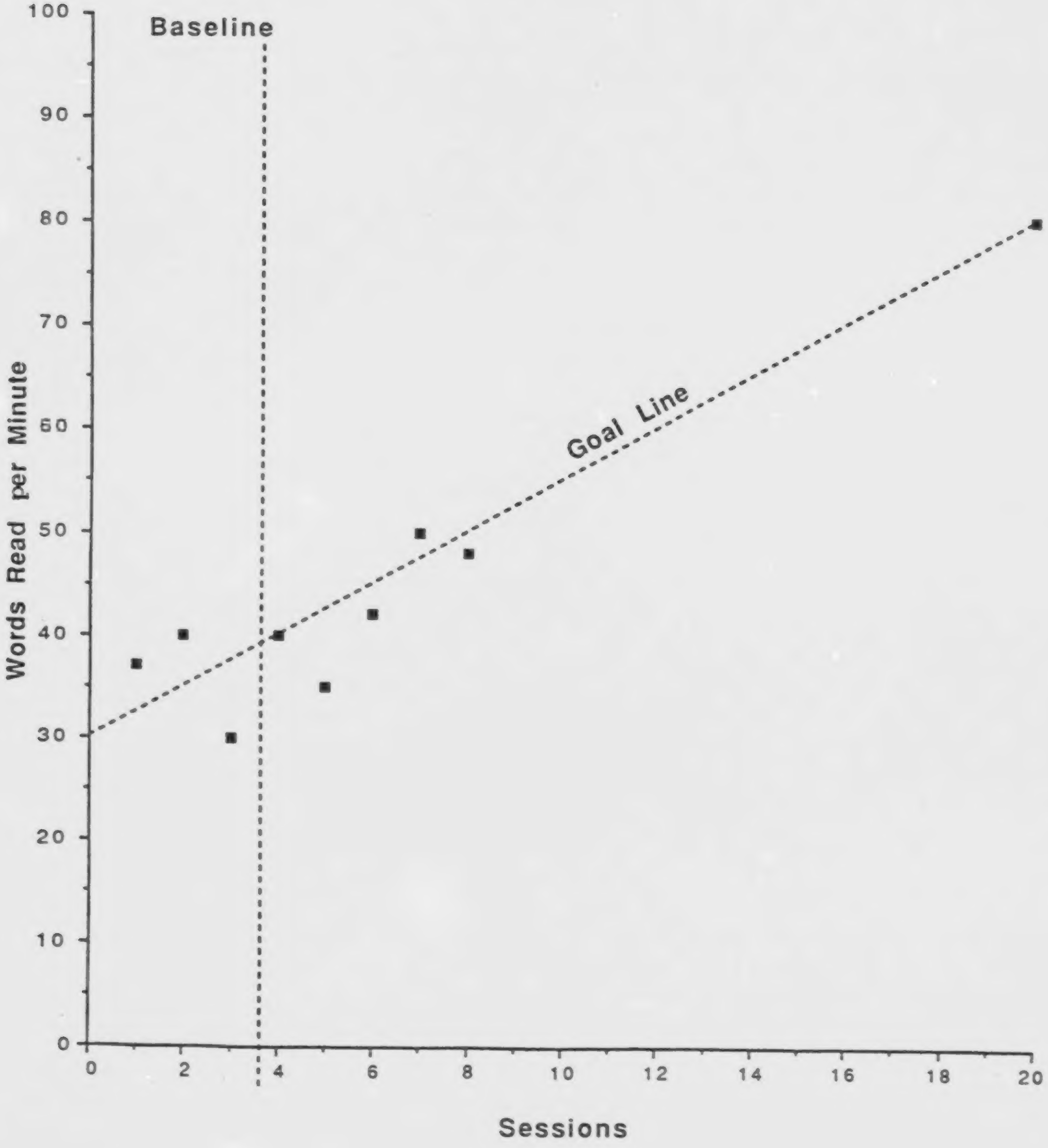
__Source__: *Science Research Associates, Inc., 155 North Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60606.*

# Appendix D

## Sample Curriculum-Based Assessment

# Sample Curriculum-Based Assessment

## READING: DECODING WORDS IN CONTEXT



## Chapter 8

# Including and Supporting Students with Disabilities within General Education

*Martha E. Snell and Rachel Janney*

## INTRODUCTION

Although federal law has required since 1975 that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (i.e., the least restrictive educational setting) as possible, states are highly varied in their records regarding integrating students with their nondisabled peers (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989). Statements in the original law mandating educational programs for students with disabilities (Public Law 94-142), which are now included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA), directed public schools to ensure that

> **To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children**, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, **are educated with children who are not handicapped**, and that **special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily**. (20 U.S.C. 1415 [5][B])

Simply stated, current special education law requires that all students with disabilities be educated alongside typical, nondisabled peers to the greatest degree possible. Any move to place a student away from the regular educational setting must occur only when it is not possible for that student's program, as supported with services, accommodations, and aides, to provide him or her with an appropriate education (Snell & Eichner, 1989). Unfortunately, school systems have tended to interpret this LRE clause less often as an integration mandate and more often as permission to provide a "cascade of services" or a continuum of placements whose restrictiveness and separation increased according to a student's disability label and the system's familiarity with appropriate intervention (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Taylor, 1988). Despite this history, the "burden of proof" lies with the school system "to justify any placement other than a regular classroom for a child with a disability" (Salisbury & Smith, 1991, p. 25).

The position taken in this chapter reflects the following assumptions:

- Students with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in general education classes and activities with their nondisabled peers.

- Supports can be provided that will enable all children in those settings to be successful.

- Strategies that allow the inclusion of students with a wide range of abilities in general education classrooms enhance learning for all students.

- The special needs of class members with disabilities need not dominate teaching time and can enable typical peers to have positive social and learning experiences within a more diverse peer group.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide administrators with an understanding of effective practices that will lead to meaningful integration or inclusion of students with disabilities. It is organized around the following frequently asked questions about inclusion:

1. **What is inclusion?**
2. **Why move to inclusive school programs?**
3. **What steps can school staff take to move to inclusive programs?**
4. **What challenges do schools face during the implementation of inclusion and how can these be addressed?**
5. **How can the effects of inclusive programs be evaluated?**

## 1. WHAT IS INCLUSION?

Inclusive schools are those in which all students belong, individual differences are valued, and all students are supported in meeting their educational needs. To achieve an inclusive school, staff provide individualized special education services and other needed supports within the context of general education, rather than relying on "pull-out" programs. Inclusive schools serve the children in their neighborhoods, including any children identified as having a disability. Inclusive schools typically operate within school systems that have developed policies supporting these practices on a system-wide basis, although the practices may still be evolving throughout these school systems.

Inclusion does not mean eliminating the support or assistance that children need to be successful learners; it does mean eliminating special education as a separate system or as practice of equating special supports and services with a special school or classroom where students must go to have their educational needs met. Inclusion does not mean trying to fit students with special needs into the mainstream; instead, it means creating a mainstream where everyone fits.

In an inclusive school, the educational programs for students with disabilities are still individually designed by the students' special educational team, but this is done in a manner that maximizes their contact with peers and enables their accomplishment of IEP goals and objectives. Although students with extensive support needs (e.g., students with severe disabilities) may sometimes require instruction in functional goals in natural contexts outside the classroom, accomplishing these goals does not necessarily require isolation from typical peers (Sailor, 1989; Snell, 1991). Many students besides those with identified disabilities learn best from hands-on activities undertaken in age-appropriate, community-referenced learning environments. Thus, when it becomes important for students with more intensive needs -- particularly those who have reached middle school and high school age -- to receive instruction that can only be provided outside the classroom (e.g., mobility instruction around the school, community-based instruction, and vocational instruction), such instruction will be provided. However, it may include nondisabled peers whose learning needs and interests also dictate that they have opportunities to access such environments. When a school determines that it should provide the most successful learning experiences it can for all students, then classes become more active, teaching methods become more varied, and the resources and supports deployed become more flexible.

Following are several other terms pertaining to inclusive programs that should be defined:

- *Age appropriate*: Matched to the student's chronological age.

- *Natural proportions*: The number of individuals with a particular characteristic (e.g., severe mental retardation, blindness, learning disabilities) that would be expected for a given geographical region or age group.

- *Segregation*: The exclusion of students with disabilities from social and/or academic school activities with their peers by placement in a separate building, annex, trailer, or hallway where only students with special needs are present or by assignment to a separate, self-contained classroom that is isolated either physically and/or by scheduled activities.

- *Integration*: The mixing of students with disabilities with nondisabled students for various school or extracurricular activities.

- *Mainstreaming*: Placing students who typically have mild disabilities into social activities or academic classes with students who do not have disabilities.

Note that while the distinction between integration and mainstreaming is less clear and these terms overlap with the term *inclusion*, these practices may not involve nondisabled peers, may not occur at the student's neighborhood school, and may not include the provision of individualized supports to accommodate the student's special needs. Also important is the concept of natural proportions of students with disabilities. When special education programs involve "clustered classrooms," busing students away from their neighborhood schools or districts, or placing them in residential schools, then the population of students in a given school or district will *not* reflect natural proportions. They may be either reduced or excessive. Placing students in their neighborhood school or the school they normally would attend regardless of disability contributes to the preservation of natural proportion.

## 2. WHY MOVE TO INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS?

The rationale for including students with disabilities with the necessary supports in general education classes alongside their nondisabled peers can be viewed from the perspectives of (a) the student with disabilities, (b) peers without disabilities and the school community, and (c) school staff. A combination of research, school statistics, and informal observation in inclusive programs undergirds the rationale for such change (e.g., Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Kluwin, Moores, & Gaustad, 1992; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989).

### Benefits for Students with Disabilities

The following is a list of frequently cited benefits for students with disabilities who are included with their nondisabled peers in general education classes and school activities:

- Probably the most often cited benefit is the possibility that natural peer supports and friendships will develop in inclusive programs. Conversely, without regular interactions between these groups of students, there is no possibility for natural peer supports or friendships to develop during school hours.

- Inclusive programs provide students who have disabilities with age-appropriate, typical role models who can have a positive influence on their communication ability, dress, social interaction, behavior, motivation for learning academic skills, and self-concept.

- Inclusive programs fulfill the basic need everyone has to belong (Kunc, 1992), which in Maslow's hierarchy of needs serves as a building block for self-esteem and self-actualization.

- For students with an inability to respond due to limited communication skills or motor limitations, inclusive settings contribute to improvements in awareness of the environment, alertness to others, appropriate behavior, and happiness.

- Inclusive programs provide a more realistic, normalized context for learning than do segregated school programs. This means that the skills students learn are more likely to be skills needed and used during school and transferred to everyday situations outside of school.

### Benefits for Typical Students and the School Community

Typical students and others in the school community also may experience benefits from inclusive programs such as the following:

- For students, educators, parents, and peers, improved expectations for and attitudes toward students with disabilities (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993; Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1992; York, Vandercook, Macdonald, Heise-Neff, & Caughey, 1992b).

- For future parents of children with disabilities, enhanced competence in parenting due to being better informed and having a positive base of experience.

- For future taxpayers and voters, enriched capability to address legislation influencing persons with disabilities in a sensible and nonprejudiced manner.

- For society at large, an increased appreciation of human diversity and individual differences in achievement that manifests itself through improvements in

  (1) Social cognition.
  (2) Increased tolerance of others.
  (3) Reduced fear of differences.
  (4) Development of personal values and principles.
  (5) Friendships and interpersonal acceptance.
  (6) Self-concept (Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990).

### Benefits for School Staff

Several recent studies (Giangreco et al., 1993; Janney et al., 1992; York et al., 1992b) have identified benefits for school staff who have positive experiences with students with disabilities, including the following:

- Increased motivation to interact with such students, and learn the skills needed to teach them, resulting in an increased feeling of "ownership" of these students.

- A willingness to collaborate with and learn from their own typical students.

- An interest in active and participatory approaches that encourage students to learn cooperatively.

- Increased expectations for learning and recognition of the potential in all students.

**Potential Pitfalls**

Because inclusive schools pose many changes in the way special education services currently are provided to students with disabilities, some concerns have been voiced in the literature. These include

- Increased parental concern over their children's acceptance by others (Lord, Varzos, Behrman, Wicks, & Wicks, 1990).

- Loneliness of students with disabilities (Lord et al., 1990).

- General education and special education teachers who are unwilling and/or uncertain about how to accommodate students with identified disabilities in the mainstream (Glomb & Morgan, 1991; Myles & Simpson, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lestar, 1991).

- The loss of needed services for children with disabilities and/or for nondisabled children (Semmel et al., 1991).

What is common to these concerns is fear of the unknown. The best antidotes to fears related to inclusion are careful and informed planning; preparation of staff, students, and parents; and positive experiences (Stainback, Stainback, Moravec, & Jackson, 1992).

Many authors have warned that high-quality inclusive programs cannot be mandated or created without the contributions of teachers, administrators, and parents. Activities that build consensus between staff and parents, provide needed information and technical assistance, and reflect the successful experience of other school systems will reduce the pitfalls.

## 3. WHAT STEPS CAN SCHOOL STAFF TAKE TO MOVE TO INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS?

Most veteran teachers and administrators are used to separate, pull-out special education programs and may not have the philosophical basis, vision, or technical training to implement inclusive programs. Therefore, it is not surprising that "some states [and school systems] have been more successful than others in providing services in regular settings that were seen as appropriate by local decision makers" (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989, p. 452). Given this history, it is important that we "Don't confuse 'I don't know how to do it' with 'It's not a good idea'" (Kunc, 1991).

Inclusive school programs have the following critical elements in common:

- Division-and building-level consensus on what integration means and commitment to pursue that vision.
- Ongoing collaboration and problem solving among educators, support staff, parents, and students.
- Curricular and instructional strategies that weave individual goals and objectives into general educational activities.
- Provision of adequate time for collaboration.
- Strong administrative support along with proactive and committed leadership.
- Parental involvement.
- Strong peer networks and other natural supports.

Change proceeds through the typical stages of planning, initiation in model or pilot schools, increased implementation, formalized policy, and widespread implementation. Successful widespread implementation of inclusive school programs requires system-wide change. Without this level of change, inclusion efforts depend on temporary "teacher deals" (Biklen, 1985). These "deals" usually mean that special education teachers elect to arrange integration on a student-by-student basis with the general education teachers they know who will take students with disabilities in their classes. Such deals are time consuming to arrange and often temporary. By contrast, when school division policy supports inclusive programs, widespread implementation is possible, although it requires extensive effort. It is important to note that policies supporting inclusive school programs will affect other school policies such as those regarding teacher and related services staff roles and job descriptions, transportation, prereferral intervention, identification and placement procedures, location of school programs, and principal roles and site-based management (or shared decision making).

There is certainly no one way to achieve an inclusive school or school system. Given the vast array of existing special education program models and service delivery configurations, it would be impossible to prescribe here the specific next steps any one school system ought to take. However, successful efforts always require adequate planning and preparation as well as ongoing support for the implementation of effective practices. A systematic, coherent approach to a system-wide effort to move toward inclusive programs typically will include the following steps or components.

### Step 1: Form a Representative Planning Group

A committee or task force that is representative of teachers and administrators in the school system, and the parents and community members who are its consumers should develop a plan to guide the system's change efforts. This advice holds true whenever schools wish to make significant changes in their programs (Sarason, 1990). Sarason (1990) has pointed out "how extraordinarily difficult it is to face the fact of intractability to change and our inability to consider alternatives. To be able to consider alternatives, one must first be dissatisfied with things as they are" (p. 110).

When educational stakeholders are requested by a school system's leaders to come together to identify problems and explore solutions, the outcomes of their planning are both richer and more likely to be accepted due to the investment made by the representative planning group (Villa & Thousand, 1992). As Kohn (1992) has noted, "It's not that people don't like to change; it's that they don't like to be changed."

### Step 2: Engage In Consensual "Visionizing"

A crucial initial activity is to develop a forum for engaging all stakeholders in a process to create a mission statement. The mission statement should reflect the school system's purpose in terms of desired outcomes for students. For example,

> Every student can learn, and every student will learn, if presented with the right opportunity to do so. It is the purpose of school to invent learning opportunities for each student each day. . . Continuous improvement, persistent innovation, and a commitment to continuing growth should be expected of all people and all programs supported by school district resources, and school district resources should be committed to ensure that these expectations can be met. (Schlechty, 1990, pp. 131-132 as cited in Villa & Thousand, 1992, p. 122)

Creating a vision can be broadened to include implementation of a consensual process to delineate a long-term, holistic "master plan for improving all facets of school operation in order to produce excellent student achievement for all students" (Alessi, 1991, p. 15). Alessi (1991) has described such a process, the Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model (ODDM) developed by the Johnson City Central Schools in New York. One key element in ODDM is that participants work collaboratively using a decision-making process of continually asking and responding to four critical questions (about a school system):

- "What do we want" (for our schools)?
- "What do we know" (about our current school practices)?
- "What do we believe?"
- "What will we do" (to achieve our goals) (Alessi, 1991, p. 13)?

Having a dynamic relationship between central office staff (i.e., the school superintendent, the director of special education, transportation staff, etc.) and the stakeholder group or task force will broaden the realism of the group's planning and their resultant recommendations. For example, a change to neighborhood schools will affect bus routes and enrollment figures although it will have a lesser effect on space needs, since self-contained classrooms will not be encouraged as a model of service provision. Furthermore, this change will mean that some special education and related services staff will become itinerant, traveling between schools to serve students and interact with teachers. Special education administrators will need to advocate for state funding changes to support inclusive educational practices, since most state special education regulations have evolved around placement in self-contained classes as the basis for providing and calculating the costs of special education (Hamre-Nietupski, Nietupski, & Maurer, 1990). Reciprocal communication between the planners and the system's administrators will lead to plans that respond to the realities of a given school system.

### Step 3: Assess Needs and Determine Priorities

The task force then can assess needs based on the two following perspectives: (a) the desired outcomes delineated through this consensual process, and (b) the implementation guidelines for inclusive programs listed later in this chapter. Many policy, personnel, inservice training, and programmatic needs will be identified. Several areas of need are likely to be addressed by task forces in most school systems. The task force must

- Determine priorities and timelines for moving students to home schools, as well as examine how bus routes and enrollment figures will be affected.

- In a systematic manner, prepare relevant special and general education staff for inclusion through inservice training activities, visits to inclusive school sites, and peer-to-peer exchanges. Inservice training needs commonly identified include skills for collaboration team problem solving and strategies to adapt instruction to individual learner needs. However, initial sessions tend to focus more on general concerns about what inclusion is and is not (e.g., it does not mean that special education services and supports will be discontinued, nor that all students will be expected to achieve the same objectives), an examination of the benefits of inclusion, and an examination of the ways that teachers' roles will change.

- Also in a systematic manner, prepare parents for inclusion. Possible activities include visiting local schools into which students with disabilities will be moving, visiting inclusive schools in other school systems, viewing videotapes of inclusive school programs such as "Regular Lives" (Biklen, 1988), and attending panel discussions with educators and other parents.

- Plan for the assignment of special education and related services staff to schools, while ensuring that they have adequate opportunities to consult and collaborate with classroom teachers. This change will often mean that some special education and related services staff become itinerant, traveling among schools to serve students and collaborate with their teachers.

- Develop and/or reallocate resources to ensure that each inclusive school program has adequate numbers of trained support staff and adequate and appropriate materials and equipment.

- Develop an evaluation plan.

**Step 4: Form School-Level Planning Teams**

Similar planning steps should take place at the school level under the leadership of the principal. No specific formula should be sought for improving a school's ability to meet the diverse needs of all of its students, although some common elements are often reported in the literature (Janney et al., 1992; Raynes, Snell, & Sailor, 1991; Sailor, Gee, & Karasoff, in press; Schattman, 1992; Snell, 1991; Villa & Thousand, 1992). Instead, teams of staff and parents, and at times students, are recruited to plan for the needed program elements and the steps an individual school will take toward implementing an inclusive program. It may be possible to use an existing collaborative team structure such as school-wide teacher assistance teams or grade-level/departmental teams to serve this planning function. Typically cited elements include the following:

- Development of a school policy/philosophy statement on integration and inclusion.

- Use of sensitization exercises as a part of planning so that staff and students become familiar in a positive way with disabilities and the specific students who will be included.

- Provision of ongoing access to knowledge and technical assistance.

- Principals who work with staff to make school modifications supportive of inclusive programs by

  (1) Revising class schedules so they allow teaming and support planning among teachers.

  (2) Adjusting class sizes.

  (3) Reconfiguring paraprofessional support and teacher assignment.

(4) Making adjustments in grading, year-end promotion, graduation, and award procedures.

(5) Granting teachers the needed flexibility and professional autonomy to convert their programs to inclusive programs.

- The ability to work in collaborative teams.
- Frequent and ongoing communication between general education teachers, special education teachers, and related services staff.
- Redistribution of a school's resources for serving students with diverse learning needs (i.e., Chapter I, remedial programs, special education) (Sailor, 1991).
- New and proven approaches to accommodating students with diverse learning characteristics into general education activities.
- Family involvement and contribution.
- Programs to develop peer support.
- Infusion of information about disability issues into general education curricula (e.g., integrating lessons about individual differences into the social studies or psychology curriculum instead of making them a separate unit on "disabilities") (Hamre-Nietupski, Ayres, Nietupski, Savage, Mitchell, & Bramman, 1989).
- Collaboration with community service agencies in an effort to provide more comprehensive supports, facilitate transition to postschool services, and coordinate efforts and planning with families.
- Use of volunteers in classrooms where students with disabilities are included.

Once inclusion has begun in a school, the planning team usually is left intact or reorganized to address the ongoing challenges that arise, examine barriers and potential solutions, and assess the status of inclusion.

### Step 5: Form Individual Student Planning Teams

When support needs are less intensive (i.e., for students having mild or moderate disabilities), other collaborative team structures already in place in the school may be used to provide support for teachers and students. (For a discussion of these teams, refer to Chapter 14.) However, when students pose extraordinary challenges, schools form individual student planning teams to address those needs and support the teachers responsible for direct service. Some students who have intensive health care needs or extensive cognitive disabilities or who exhibit excessive problem behavior may require the regular attention of an individual student planning team. These teams have the following characteristics:

- Primary team members include both the special education and general education teachers; the student's parent(s), guardian; or an involved family member; paraprofessionals; and in some cases peers. Additional members, including related services staff, the school nurse, the school counselor, a psychologist, other general education teachers, and the principal, may join regularly or periodically.

- Teams meet regularly, with the frequency of meetings depending on student need. In Vermont, individual student planning teams meet weekly at the beginning of the school year but may decrease the frequency of their meetings as progress is made.

- As with other collaborative teams, members engage in cooperative roles, have predetermined agendas, record meeting decisions, and identify activities and responsibilities of team members and others to address problem areas.

### Step 6: Implement Recommended Changes

Attendance of students with exceptional learning needs in neighborhood schools and their inclusion in general education classes will likely require extensive changes in the social and organizational structures of a school system. For some schools, however, the changes may not be extensive. Recommended changes should evolve from the school system's efforts in planning through a representative task force. Some prevalent modifications include the following:

- Students with disabilities are physically present as part of their neighborhood school communities both socially and academically, which may mean changes in transportation, school assignment, class membership, individual schedules, and teacher ownership (Gerber & Semmel, 1984; Giangreco & Putnam, 1991).

- Pull out programs (e.g., special education, Chapter I compensatory programs, remedial programs, and therapy) are changed to in-class programs. Because pull-out programs often are criticized by educators (i.e., teachers and students have identified such programs as nonpreferred, socially stigmatizing, and leading to few long-lived academic gains), changes will be welcomed by many (Anderson & Pellicer, 1990; Giangreco, 1986; Jenkins & Heinen, 1989; Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelick, & Gallagher, 1990). Successful modifications have included substituting substantially different programs that are integrated into the classroom and developed through the collaboration of general and special education teachers.

- Special education personnel fill consultative or collaborative roles rather than providing all special education services directly to students with disabilities (York, Giangreco, Vandercook, & Macdonald, 1992).

- Educators engage in collaborative teaming with a work schedule that supports this activity (Giangreco et al., 1993; Glomb & Morgan, 1991; York et al., 1992).

- Education staff work in teams with parents to define individualized supports for students with disabilities so they can succeed in general education. The concept of providing individualized support replaces the practice of classification and separation ("placement") for the receipt of special education services (Luckasson et al., in press; York et al., 1992).

- Strategies such as cooperative learning groups; individualized instruction; multilevel instruction; matrixing; and adaptation in curriculum, material, and response mode are learned and used by teachers to better accommodate the diverse needs of learners in inclusive classrooms (Putnam, Rynders, Johnson, & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, Madden, & Leavey, 1984).

School superintendents and principals need to accompany their understanding and support of these changes with approaches such as the following that are likely to facilitate change:

- Begin by studying successful examples of inclusion using visits to and videos of successful inclusion programs and horizontal interactions (parents from successful systems speaking to parents about the changes, administrators speaking to administrators, and teachers speaking to teachers). Appendix A lists appropriate videotapes.

- Provide staff and parents with a range of informational materials on inclusion. Appendix B lists some materials available in Virginia.

- Seek participation of all stakeholders in the process of defining the school's mission and philosophy on inclusion and identifying the needed changes and commitments of staff time and communication.

- Provide firm endorsement of changes developed by the team(s) of stakeholders and lend support to the ongoing evaluation of outcomes.

- Introduce changes gradually or incrementally with the needed time and resources.

- Localize change to part of the school program or to a subset of the school system's students and staff, rather than to the entire school system initially.

- Make use of a concerns-based approach to implementing change that involves ongoing assessment of concerns and responsive facilitation by teachers and administrators who understand inclusion (Hall & Hord, 1987; Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987).

- Reduce conflict by providing increased planning time.

- Anticipate Murphy's Law ("if anything can go wrong it will") and support ongoing problem-solving teams at division and school levels (Bredo & Bredo, 1975; Evans, 1990; Sarason, 1990).

Be prepared for the process of change to inclusive programs to take time and be difficult. Many have noted that if school change occurs smoothly, it is likely to be superficial. Others have described an "implementation dip," or a period of little change following initial large, positive changes. Practitioners involved in the change process need ongoing administrative and peer support, and they also may need to be encouraged, pushed, and provided with time for processing the change that occurs.

## 4. WHAT CHALLENGES DO SCHOOLS FACE DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION, AND HOW CAN THESE BE ADDRESSED?

Like most other efforts to improve educational programs, inclusion poses some predictable challenges and obstacles. Many of the obstacles result from the concept of change itself; others result from the cooperative relationship that special educators must have with general educators to make inclusion work. Increased information and careful planning by the stakeholders, coupled with thoughtful implementation and evaluation, are likely to reduce the obstacles. Some of the frequent barriers that many school systems must confront are addressed next.

### Modifications in School Organization

Reform in school organization has been debated by researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in both general and special education. School reform in general education has been directed toward reducing the numbers of students who are at risk for dropping out of school without the skills needed for basic employment. In special education, a major debate often referred to as the *regular education initiative (REI)* has focused on the narrower concept of the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. Two predominant issues in this debate are (1) whether or not regular and special education should merge or stay separate and (2) whether students with disabilities should be returned to age-appropriate classes in general education with the needed supports or receive educational services primarily on a pull-out basis.

Discussion regarding school reform has infrequently included the issues identified in the REI, and, given the separate nature of special education, debate regarding the

REI has been focused primarily within the special education community. However, the issues are highly interrelated.

Skrtic (1991) has written about current school organization and its inability to support the changes required for successful inclusion and school reform. Like Sarason (1990), who has written about needed reforms in school culture, Skrtic has suggested that changes in school organization must be addressed first. Such restructuring changes will provide the foundation for other needed reforms.

Schools need to function as *adhocracies*-organizations whose members engage in active, collaborative problem solving to address the unique challenges students present as those challenges arise. In the adhocratic organization, teachers do not typically work alone, nor does the primary organization resemble a professional bureaucracy (the way teachers currently work), in which educators specialize by grade and/or subject or, as in special education, by disability area. In schools with an adhocratic organization it is assumed that (a) learning is highly complex, (b) experienced educators can pool talents, and (c) collaborative problem solving is the norm.

Thus, in reformed schools no one believes that standard classification of students and educators by specialty area with standard products and methods will meet the needs of even most students. In contrast to both machine bureaucracies (the way school administrations typically are organized) and professional bureaucracies (the way teachers are organized), in the adhocratic school environment teachers respect specialty areas but typically collaborate, mutually adjusting and reciprocally interacting to design novel products and services as solutions to educational problems.

A recent study of schools that had achieved various degrees of integration provided support for Skrtic's appeal for organizational change. Janney and colleagues (1992) found that the changes schools had made to integrate some students into mainstream activities, locations, and classes were "add-ons" -- changes that did not threaten the stability of the existing school organization. General education teachers who received the integrated students still worked primarily alone because the organizational changes needed to support collaborative teaming among school staff had not been made by principals, nor had teachers been taught to use or rely on collaboration among themselves. Likewise, few modifications had been made in the standard curriculum to include students academically, in part because the focus was primarily on social inclusion. Self-contained classrooms were retained when integration was partial, necessitating the maintenance by special education teachers of two models of service provision (manage self-contained classrooms and mainstream students), which meant little support for students in the mainstream. Despite the failure to make needed organizational changes, both teachers and school administrators often commented on the many positive changes brought about by integration.

Thus, perhaps the greatest challenge to schools seeking to include students with disabilities is the underlying need to tackle some aspects of basic organizational reform rather than simply make cosmetic changes that may either overload the existing system or fall short of lasting, meaningful change (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992). The changes that Sarason and Skrtic have suggested would seem to contribute to school quality far beyond the benefits of including students with disabilities.

**Identifying and Providing Supports**

Inclusion rests firmly on the assumption that diversity poses benefits for schools and for students. The traditional practice is to identify students with disabilities or delays, separate them into so-called "homogeneous groups," and provide standardized services to match their special educational labels. In inclusive programs, these practices are replaced with the approach of individually supporting students while they function as members of classes and take part in activities with their nondisabled peer group. Support can be defined as

> Resources and strategies that promote the interests and causes of individuals with or without disabilities; that enable them to access resources, information, and relationships inherent within integrated work and living environments; and that result in the person's enhanced interdependence, productivity, community integration, and satisfaction (Luckasson et al., 1992, p. 101).

What are the sources and functions of support? Teachers and paraprofessionals providing instruction exemplify one direct source and one function of support. *Supports must not, however, be equated with one-to-one adult assistance or teaching.* Luckasson and colleagues (in press) have described the following four sources of support:

- Individuals (e.g., their skills, competencies, ability to make choices).
- Other people (e.g., family, friends, co-workers, teachers, psychologists).
- Technology (e.g., assistive devices, job accommodations).
- Services (e.g., medical, vocational, behavioral).

These four sources provide supports that have one or more of the eight possible functions shown in Table 1 (Luckasson et al., 1992, p. 103).

As presented in Table 1, curriculum adaptation is support with the function of teaching, while environmental accommodations (e.g., elevators to the second floor of a school) and technological devices (e.g., motorized wheelchairs and electronic communication boards) serve the support function of facilitating school access and use. Natural sources of support, or those provided by peers, friends, and co-workers or through the individual's own initiative, without cost or "red tape" are preferable to paid supports because they are independent of school budgets and are unobtrusive.

## Table 1. Support Functions

| *Supports* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| 1. Teaching | Advocating, instructing, adapting curriculum, collecting data, supervising, communicating, and providing feedback. |
| 2. Befriending | Socializing, enjoying, sharing and confiding, and accompanying. |
| 3. Financial planning | Advocating for benefits and coverage of services, adjusting work benefits and SSI-Medicaid, helping with money management, check cashing and budgeting, protection and legal assistance. |
| 4. Employee assistance | Provision of counseling, crisis intervention, and assistance; assisting in job accommodation and redesign; enhancing job performance; supervisory training; and procurement of assistive technology devices. |
| 5. Behavioral support | Functional analysis, antecedent strategies such as the manipulation of ecological and setting events and the provision of schedule and activity choices, teaching alternate adaptive responses, and building environments with effective consequences. |
| 6. In-home living assistance | Personal maintenance and care, transfers and mobility, attendant care, housekeeping and homemaker services, dressing and clothing care, home health aides, medical alert devices, communication devices, and architectural modifications. |
| 7. Community and school access and use | Car pooling and transportation programs, recreation and leisure involvement, transportation and pedestrian training; modification of vehicles, community use awareness and opportunities, and interfacing with generic agencies including schools, advocacy, and legal assistance. |
| 8. Health assistance | Medical appointments, health supervision and interventions, counseling appointments and interventions, medication taking, hazards awareness, physical therapy, and mobility assistive devices. |

*Source: Adapted from Luckasson et al. (1992).*

Individualized profiles of support are defined for students with disabilities and evaluated regularly by teams that include educators, parents, the students as appropriate, related services personnel, and infant or adult service agencies for students completing or entering a transition between programs. These individualized support profiles replace the service delivery model that relies on placing students into classrooms or services according to their disability label. Profiles of individualized supports evolve from assessment, as well as from collaborative teaming, ongoing interactions, and the problem solving that naturally occurs among teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, peers, and students. Some of these supports are listed in a student's IEP; others are requested or arranged by teachers, medical and social services, family members, the student or his or her peers.

Consistent with profiles of support is a special education placement or service delivery system that couples intensity of staff support with student need and asks "What staff and planning support is needed to support this student in a regular classroom setting?" Figure 1 illustrates an approach for matching services and supports to students with identified disabilities used in Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, a school district in Vermont. Students with disabilities are provided with an increasing amount of support as needed to keep them performing successfully with their peers. For most students, then, the process traditionally referred to as *placement* is now more accurately termed *support* because students are not placed away from their peers but supported alongside them.

### Modifications in Teachers' Roles

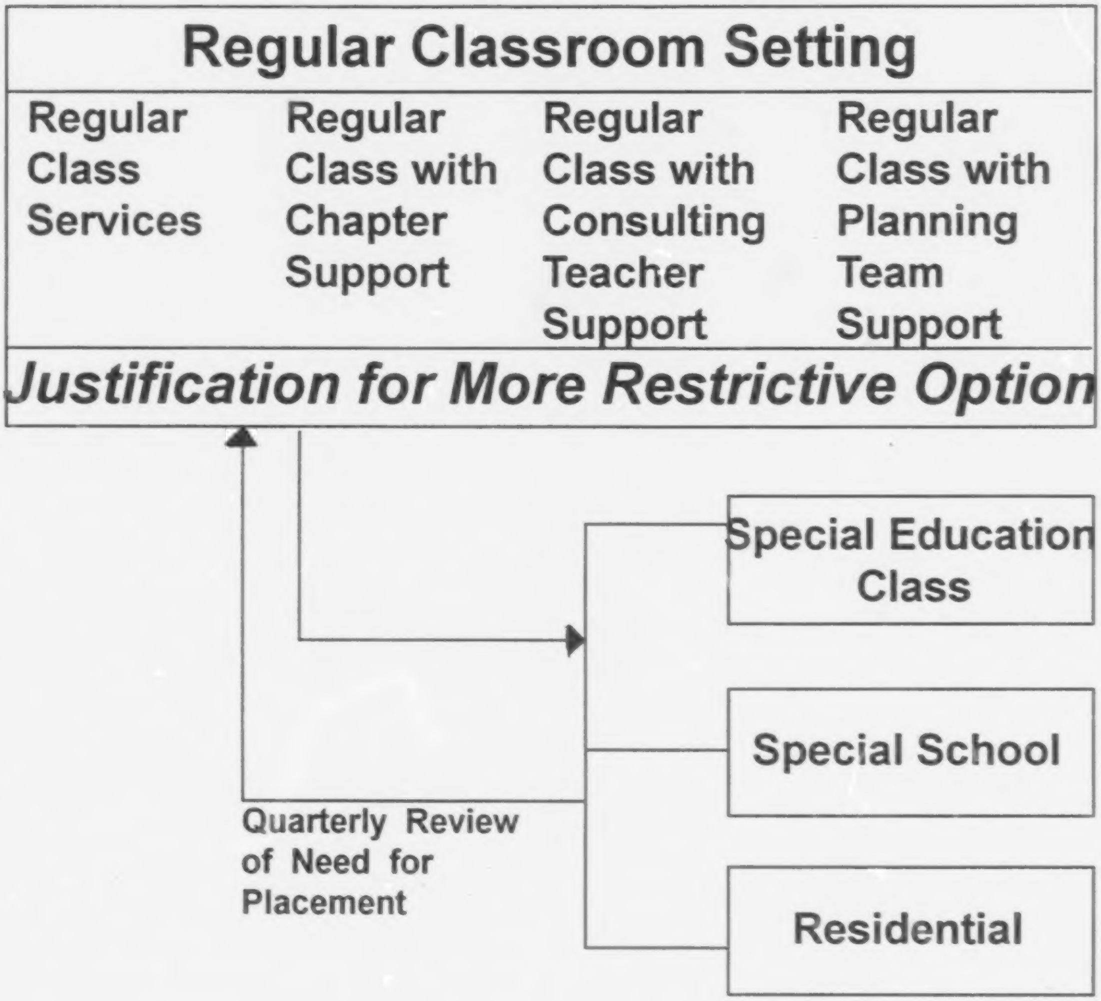
Successful inclusion requires that special and general education teachers collaborate as they provide support to students with disabilities. Working as a team, teachers blend their ideas and those of related services staff, the students' parents, typical peers, and paraprofessionals to

- Define what supports particular students need, who will provide them, and/or how they will be provided.
- Adapt general curriculum to suit students' needs and abilities.
- Modify teaching approaches and class activities as needed to include students in meaningful ways.
- Accommodate students physically.
- Evaluate student outcomes.
- Enhance understanding among all who interact with students who have disabilities and thus provide coherence to their educational experiences.

Figure 1

## Continuum of Support Services Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union

After 1986


Regular Classroom Setting
Regular Class Services
Regular Class with Chapter Support
Regular Class with Consulting Teacher Support
Regular Class with Planning Team Support
Justification for More Restrictive Option
Special Education Class
Special School
Residential
Quarterly Review of Need for Placement

(The continuum of support services used after 1986 in the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, a school district in Vermont. (Reprinted with permission from R. Schattman [January, 1992]. Creating the complete school: Full inclusion the next step. A workshop at the School Leader's Institute on Inclusive Education, Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project, Charlottesville.)

The way a special education teacher elects to work in a school will depend on many factors, (including preferences of the general education teacher(s) in whose class the student is a member, student needs, agreed-upon supports, age group, and number and type of other support staff). The special education teacher's role can include many of the following responsibilities:

- *Monitoring and indirect support*. On a regular, but individually determined basis, special education teachers will directly observe the students on their case load; observe and provide feedback, assistance, and/or training to both professional staff (e.g., music and physical education teachers) and paraprofessional staff who have responsibility for the student with special needs; and indirectly monitor their progress through meetings with the general education teachers serving the student.

- *Individualized instruction that includes or is limited to the student with disabilities*. Sometimes, the student with special needs will receive direct individual instruction in the classroom, while other students do independent, one-to-one, or small-group work.

- *Co-teaching*. Special education teachers may co-teach with general education teachers, taking a small heterogeneous group, a larger group, or an entire class part time as a way of monitoring progress, providing adaptations and direct student support, or facilitating contact with a broader group of students for whom they may provide consultation, including those not identified as having special needs, but who pose certain challenges.

- *Collaboration and consultation*. School planning teams or other curriculum or grade-level planning teams will offer a regular forum for problem solving, while individual student planning teams, established for students with more extensive needs, provide a more intensive medium for cooperating on solutions.

- *Fostering peer support*. Special educators will work directly with typical peers to foster their understanding, support of, and creative problem solving for students with disabilities who are included in their classes (Haring, 1991). Also, special educators will aim for these same goals indirectly by working through the receiving teachers and at times with school counselors, parents, or class volunteers as they foster the support and understanding of typical peers.

Successful strategies range from more formal approaches to very informal discussions with peers and depend primarily on the age of the peers involved. The following are some points to consider in selecting inclusion strategies:

- *Cross-age and peer tutoring* are best when the tutor is in at least third or fourth grade; tutoring encourages helping/teaching relationships rather than friendships.

- *Circle of friends and McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) groups* work best after second grade and encourage students to "get in the shoes" of a peer with disabilities whom they know through shared school contact (Forest & Lusthaus, 1989; Perske, 1988; Stainback, Stainback, & Wilkinson, 1992; Vandercook, York, & Forest, 1989).

- *Peer support groups and networks* (Haring, 1991) consist of students who choose to meet regularly with a faculty facilitator (often the special education teacher or school counselor) because they are interested in being friends with or supporting a member of their class who has disabilities. These groups are similar to MAPS groups, but they may be more flexible in their agenda for problem solving and learning about how to provide support to include their peers with disabilities.

- *Buddy systems or friendship groups,* often formed during the middle school or high school grades, may pair students who have disabilities with peers who are not disabled in a mentoring or "buddy" arrangement and/or encourage the students to gather as small groups for extracurricular activities.

### Meaningful Participation

Through collaboration with general educators and others serving a student with disabilities, the special education teacher works to ensure that the student participates meaningfully in integrated activities (Stainback & Stainback, 1992). A variety of approaches contribute to meaningful participation including the following:

- Curricular adaptations that allow students in general education classes to achieve their IEP goals and objectives in one or more of the following ways (Ford, Davern, & Schnorr, 1992; Giangreco & Putnam, 1991):

  (1) Use the same activity and the same objective but a modified method of presentation, practice, and/or evaluation (e.g., use different materials, another response mode such as typing instead of writing, letting the student tell or show you the answer rather than write the answer, etc.). This approach is most often useful with students who have mild disabilities.
  (2) Use the same activity but at multiple levels of difficulty (i.e., multilevel instruction). This means involving some students who are pursuing objectives at different levels but within the same content area (e.g., in math some students work on addition and others work on one-to-one correspondence; during reading some write in their diaries while others select and affix photos to represent their entries). Multilevel instruction can be used for students with mild or severe disabilities.
  (3) Use of the same activity but objectives from different content areas, allowing some students to participate in an activity because it allows them

to learn important social, motor, or communication skills alongside peers who are learning specific course content (e.g., during a science unit on plants, most students learn about leaves and photosynthesis while one student assists the teacher in handing out materials, following directions, and communicating with students by saying their names). This approach has particular relevance to students with severe disabilities.

- For each active IEP objective, teachers use an appropriate approach for gathering student performance information, analyzing progress at least weekly, and making needed instructional modifications.

- Written teaching guides, specifying the steps of an activity and teaching methods in an easy-to-use format, are developed and maintained as determined necessary by the special education teacher and the individual student planning team.

- Teachers keep a current schedule of daily student activities that lists the activity, location, time, sequence, and staff responsible. Students are taught to use personalized schedules that are individualized for their understanding and use.

- A variety of noncompetitive and cooperative grouping options are used that teach interdependence and cooperation (e.g., cooperative learning groups and peer or cross-age tutoring).

**Inclusion Across Different Age Groups**

*Preschoolers*. Special education programs reach age groups that are both younger and older than typical students enrolled in general education. This means that schools must reconsider the location of such programs so a broader age range of typical students is available than currently exists in public schools.

Several models for providing special education to preschoolers with identified disabilities or developmental delays may be used in one community. For example, the school system may

- Provide special education services to identified children who are enrolled in private preschools using itinerant teachers and related services staff (Thompson et al., 1991).

- Create publicly or privately funded preschool programs that serve heterogeneous groups of children, some of whom have identified disabilities (Peck, Hayden, Wandschneider, Peterson, & Richarz, 1989).

- Combine special education preschool programs with Head Start programs and with existing child care programs in high school vocational programs -- without violating the principle of natural proportions (the maintenance of expected numbers of students with disabilities rather than more or fewer than naturally exist in communities).

- Expand the provision of special education services to homes and day care locations for the younger preschoolers, while encouraging part- or full-time enrollment in integrated preschools when preschoolers turn 3 or 4 years of age (Bailey & Winton, 1989).

Each of these models is already in place in various school districts in Virginia (Aveno, 1990; J. Harvey, personal communication, March 27, 1992). The more diverse the community, the more likely it will be that all of these preschool options will be needed.

*Post-High-School-Age Students*. For students who continue in special education after age 18, schools must identify an educational location where members of the same peer group who are not disabled are engaged in education or vocational training. Retaining students aged 18 to 21 in high schools is age inappropriate. Students who participate in post-high-school special education programs typically have extensive support needs. They have finished high school programs and participated in graduation ceremonies, but probably did not complete graduation requirements. Depending upon their individualized transition plans (ITPs), these students would receive special education during their last 3 to 4 years of school (ages 18 through 21 years) through an individualized approach with somewhat flexible characteristics such as the following (Sailor, Anderson, Halvorsen, Doering, Filler, & Goetz, 1989; Snell, Moon, & Talarico, 1988):

- The major thrusts for instruction would be toward obtaining and holding a community job, typically by using a supported employment approach, using the community, and maintaining and/or expanding a base of peer support.

- The home base location for individuals receiving post-high-school special education might be on the campus of a community college or university or at a vocational setting where peers who do not have disabilities receive job instruction (e.g., a food services department in a hospital or university, telephone company, etc., but not a sheltered workshop or activity center).

- Having a home base location should not mean that the program becomes self-contained; very little, if any, of the students' day would be spent clustered as a group with fellow students who have disabilities in the post-high-school program.

- Most post-high-school students would spend the majority of their day in individual job instruction or intern settings.

- Most post-high-school students also would have individually determined community schedules consisting of leisure activities, volunteer service provision, time with peers, and instruction on using their community facilities.

- Adult service agencies (e.g., vocational rehabilitation or an agency providing supported employment services, a community services board, etc.) -- naturally a part of the ITP team -- would play a central role during this program to facilitate the transition for each student following his or her 21st year.

**Community-Based Instructional Programs**

For adolescents and adults with moderate to severe disabilities, the practice of teaching functional skills outside the classroom in the school community or the nearby community is supported on a widespread basis (Sailor et al., 1989). The purpose of community-based programs for these students is to facilitate skill generalization to actual home and community settings. Since poor transfer of skills from one set of conditions to another is well documented among students with more extensive cognitive disabilities, simulation of community conditions at school is not typically effective. Community-based instruction should have the following characteristics:

- Instructional groups are small, with no more than three students.

- The skills taught are identified for each student using an informal ecological inventory process. Teachers survey students' families; students themselves when possible; and probable future school, community, and work settings to identify priority activities and skills that are individually functional.

- The skills taught are age appropriate for each student.

- The frequency of instruction in the community increases with age (two to four times per month for grades four and five; two times per week in middle school; three times per week in high school; and most or all of each school day for post-high-school students).

- Program development involves careful planning with school, parents, and community along with ongoing monitoring of the community settings chosen, schedules, transportation, safety, supervision and instruction, and outcomes.

- The skills taught include community use (e.g., shopping, restaurant use, making and keeping medical appointments, street crossing, bus riding); domestic skills (e.g., learning to clean, prepare meals, etc. using a home in the community); leisure and recreation skills (e.g., using the library, the "Y," and local parks); and vocational skills (e.g., getting to and from work, learning several jobs).

Although community-based instruction removes students from classrooms and their typical peers, it appears to be essential in enabling older students with extensive cognitive disabilities to acquire functional skills. Many also have suggested that community-based instructional programs are appropriate for a broader range of students than simply those with extensive cognitive disabilities. Such programs can be broadened to include other students, with and without identified disabilities, who would benefit from the opportunity to directly apply the skills they are learning in school. Broadening community-based instruction to include both nonvocational skills and students who are not disabled would enrich instruction for many students. Not only could adding students who are at risk of failing to graduate improve their schooling, it could also serve to integrate existing community-based instruction by including students who do not have disabilities.

## Integration of Related Services

When most therapy or specialized services (e.g., speech and communication therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and adaptive physical education) are provided in the context of ongoing school activities rather than being isolated in therapy contexts, students are more likely to generalize their learning to everyday routines and therapists are more likely to address practical problems and solutions. This approach to providing therapy is referred to as *integrated therapy* or therapy integrated into daily routine, and it has some distinct characteristics (Rainforth, York, & Macdonald, 1992; York, Rainforth, & Giangreco, 1990). Infrequently, some therapy is more appropriately given in private settings, when the objectives concern personal management or the individual is self-conscious about the therapy. Integrated therapy has the following characteristics:

- The locations for therapy are school and community settings where students are scheduled to be, not isolated therapy rooms or gymnasiums where only students with disabilities are in attendance.

- Therapy is given in the context of the school and community activities scheduled for the student and/or the class the student is assigned to.

- Therapy techniques are integrated into the student's instructional program, not simply provided in the same setting.

- Therapy objectives in IEPs are not written separately by therapists but are the result of team consensus and are referenced to performance in priority activities and settings.

- Therapists do not simply become consultants to teachers, but maintain direct, "hands on" contact with their students so they can continue to be effective providers of indirect therapy through teaching others.

- Therapists, along with other educational team members, determine which goals of therapy can be met through other adults or peers and which require "hands-on" contact by therapists.

Placement of students in neighborhood schools means that integrated therapy will require improved approaches to service delivery, participation in team meetings, and scheduling of therapy.

## 5. HOW CAN THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS BE EVALUATED?

Researchers have evaluated many aspects of inclusion by measuring (a) attitudes toward others with disabilities; (b) social interactions (their number, positive or negative, successful or unsuccessful); (c) academic performance (mastery of specific content, classroom grades, standardized test scores); (d) friendship networks (sociograms, interview, observation); and (e) number of IEP objectives met and quality of IEPs.

Although schools may wish to evaluate in one or more of these ways to monitor the effects of inclusion, the effects actually are much broader. Teachers, other school staff (professional and paraprofessional), administrators, parents, and many members of the community who are not directly involved in schools will experience the effects. How these individuals perceive change is perhaps more important than what actually changes. Instead of formal measures such as questionnaires or structured interviews, "friendly" measures are better ways for schools to judge how inclusion is progressing and its ripple effects, both positive and negative. Such approaches might include the following:

- School planning team members soliciting feedback from school staff not on the team: teachers to teachers, parents to parents, and so on.

- Teachers keeping notes on students' comments and their responses.

- Teachers talking to parents during parent conferences and reporting the range of views voiced during faculty or team meetings.

- Principals keeping notes on parents' and teachers' comments.

When collaborative teams are active and representative, evaluation information is used formatively; teams respond to criticism constructively by examining the facts and making needed improvements. Evaluation of inclusion also should be part of a self-study process in which a school assesses its progress in achieving what its members view as their goals or outcomes consistent with their beliefs about education (Alessi, 1991). For example, follow-up studies of graduates from inclusive programs might focus on the following questions:

- Do typical students have positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities?
- Do students who have received special education
  1. (1) Get community jobs and keep them?
  2. (2) Get along with co-workers?
  3. (3) Attain some degree of self-sufficiency while living in the community?
  4. (4) Enjoy adult life (have friends, engage in community leisure activities, etc.)?
  5. (5) Successfully pursue higher education or technical education opportunities?
  6. (6) Become law-abiding citizens of communities?

## SUMMARY

The bottom line for any educational reform is that it contributes to our have occurred overarching goal "to engender and sustain in (all) students a desire to continue individual growth, pursue knowledge, develop aesthetic sensibilities. . .by providing intellectually challenging programs" (Sarason, 1990, p. 156). Within this same context, for any placement to be considered "least restrictive," the placement must provide a reasonable opportunity for meaningful educational benefit to the student, not a step backwards or a place where no learning occurs (Brady, McDougall, & Dennis, 1989). No matter what the actual changes are, educational reform is predictably difficult (Sarason, 1990). However, the changes associated with successful inclusion of students with disabilities

- Can be described and observed in many schools.
- Cannot be prescribed by formula or mandated from above.
- Appear to contribute to other needed changes in schools.
- Foster conditions conducive to growth in all students.
- Foster teacher collaboration and growth.
- Are compatible with the current climate for school reform, restructuring, shared decision making, and valuing diversity of learners.

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# APPENDIX A

## Videotapes on Inclusion

## Videotapes on Inclusion

1. **A New Way of Thinking. Gaus, W. E., Terwilliger, J., & Terwilliger, M. Stay Tuned Production. (1987)**

   This video is approximately 20 minutes long and describes successful integration experiences for children and adults (preschool, school-age, transition, and adults).

   Total cost: $42.50

   Order from:
   TASH
   1121 Greenwood Avenue N.
   Seattle, WA 98133
   Tel: (206) 361-8870

2. **Regular Lives. Goodwin, T., & Wurzburg, G. Washington, DC, State of the Art Productions. (1988)**

   Regular Lives is a 28-minute videotape showing students with disabilities integrated into regular education classrooms in elementary, middle, and high school. It also shows adults with disabilities integrated into the community.

   Total cost: $48.45

   Order from:
   PBS Video
   1320 Braddock Place
   Alexandria, VA 22314
   Tel: 1(800)424-7963

3. **The Way to Go. Beckstead, S. P., & Goetz, L. San Francisco: San Francisco State University. (1988)**

   This tape is meant to be an awareness-level training tool addressing the inclusion of students with multiple severe disabilities in integrated, community-based instruction. The tape is 20 minutes long.

   Total cost: $42.50

   Order from:
   TASH
   1121 Greenwood Avenue N.
   Seattle, WA 98133
   Tel: (206) 361-8870

4. **With a Little Help from My Friends. Forest, M., & de Sousa Valdemar. Vision Video Magic Concepts and Production Ltd. (1988)**

   This videotape was produced in Canada and shows students with disabilities attending school in regular education classes. It tells how to form a "circle of friends." The video is divided into three parts: "The Vision," "Let's Talk," and "May's Map." It includes the reactions of regular education students and staff to integration. The videotape runs approximately 65 minutes.

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|---|---|
| Total cost: | $55.00 |
| Order from: | Expectations Unlimited<br>P.O. Box 655<br>Niwot, CO 80544 |

5. **There's Always Belinda. Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Youth Involvement--Ontario.**

There's Always Belinda is a name given by a group of teens who created an after-school friendship with a 14 year old named Belinda. of Guelph, Ontario.

This videotape addresses the importance of all teens having friends their own age and opportunities to socialize. Teenagers discuss their relationships and involvement with Belinda and the effect their friendship has had on their lives. Having friends has turned Belinda around. The positive changes in Belinda's language, her appearance, and her social calendar are shown.

There's Always Belinda is geared to a young audience: fifth grade to high school. Also, parents and teachers interested in starting friendship circles for youth who are challenged would benefit from viewing. (Available in both English and French.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Video cost: | Purchase $40.00<br>3-day rental $25.00 (add $10.00 for out-of-town orders) |
| Order from: | Youth Involvement-Ontario<br>180 Duncan Mill Road, Suite 600<br>Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3B126<br>(519) 843-2197 |

6. **Hello, My Friends. John Stoddard Publications, Inc. for British Columbia Association on Community Living (Producer) (1990). Vancouver: British Columbia Association for Community Living.**

This 17-minute videotape shows successful integration strategies in the New Ungraded Primary Program in British Columbia, Canada. The tape portrays four children with disabilities and their friends who attend the same primary classroom in the Primary 1 through 3 schools. Curriculum adaptation, collaboration, and peer support are illustrated.

Total cost: $37.30 (U.S. cost per video for groups and professionals; $26.60 for families)

**Booklet: Learning Together. Bracewell, D. Vancouver: British Columbia Association for Community Living. (updated)**

Also available from BCACL, this 48-page book stands alone or may be used in conjunction with the videotape. The first section charts the last 10 years' progress in integrating children with challenging needs into regular classroom settings; the second section is a collection of stories about children, regardless of ability, learning side by side; the last section offers resources.

| | |
|---|---|
| Total cost: | $52.50 (Payment must be enclosed with orders.) |
| Order from: | BC Association for Community Living (BCACL)<br>#300-30 East 6th Avenue<br>Vancouver, BC V5T 4P4<br>Tel: (604) 875-1119<br>Fax: (604) 875-6744 |

*Note: Many of these tapes are available through the Technical Assistance Centers serving programs for students with disabilities:*

*George Mason University (703-993-3665)*
*Virginia Tech (1-800-848-2714)*
*Virginia Commonwealth University (804-367-8802)*

# APPENDIX B

## Materials from the Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project
## 1987-1992

## Materials from the Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project
## 1987-1992

1. Disability Awareness Manual.
   This manual provides a practical guide for educators to use in conducting disability awareness training for nondisabled students in integrated school sites. It provides both background information and sample training activities.

2. Integration of Students with Severe Disabilities into Regular Schools.
   This program packet provides administrators, teachers, and parents with general information about the "why's" and "how's" of integrating students with severe disabilities into regular education schools. The rationale for integration is discussed, and concepts such as integration, mainstreaming, and home schools are described. Typical questions about integration are also answered.

3. Facilitating Social Interactions Between Persons with Severe Disabilities and their Nondisabled Peers in School and Community Settings.
   This program packet provides in-depth information about how to ensure that students with severe disabilities are not only physically integrated, but also socially integrated with their nondisabled peers.

4. Design, Delivery, and Monitoring of Effective Instructional Programs for Learners with Disabilities.
   This program packet provides a variety of practical suggestions and illustrations of procedures for designing individualized instructional programs for learners with severe disabilities. Guidelines for instructional procedures, data collection, and the use of data to improve instruction are included.

5. Community-Based Instruction in Integrated School Programs for Students with Moderate or Severe Disabilities.
   Suggestions for effective design and implementation of community-based instructional activities are provided in this program packet. Sample instructional programs are also included.

6. Moving from Segregated to Integrated Special Education: A System Change Process for Local Education Agencies.
   This manual outlines a process for planning and implementing local efforts to change from a segregated to an integrated model of special education service delivery.

7. Helping Local School Systems to Integrate Learners with Severe Disabilities: A Manual for Technical Assistance Providers.
   This manual is intended for use by statewide systems change projects or other technical assistance organizations that are assisting local education agencies with their integration and program improvement efforts. It outlines the technical assistance model implemented by The Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project and includes copies of planning and evaluation documents.

8. On Common Ground (videotape).
   This videotape includes interviews with special and regular education administrators and teachers in several school divisions in Virginia and shows students with moderate and severe disabilities involved in a variety of integrated school and community learning activities. It is designed primarily as an awareness-level training tool.

9. Best Practice Guidelines for Students with Severe Disabilities (brochure).

10. Exemplary Site Brochure.

These materials are available at no charge or for a nominal charge to cover copying and postage. For more information or to place an order, please contact

*Fred P. Orelove, Ph.D.*
*Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities*
*Virginia Commonwealth University*
*Box 3020*
*Richmond, VA 23284-3020*
*(804) 225-3876*

## Chapter 9

# Positive Behavior Management: Fostering Responsible Student Behavior

*Lori Korinek*

## INTRODUCTION

Behavior management in schools has been ranked as an educational concern at or near the top of the annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools for the past 20 years. Dealing with behavior consumes a great deal of teachers' and administrators' time and energy. Despite the resources devoted to management, many school personnel are relying on traditional, punitive forms of discipline that are of questionable value to the students involved. Positive approaches that are responsive to student needs and yield more responsible, appropriate behavior should be the focus of management programs. In the context of the overall school climate, behavior management has a profound effect on students' attitudes toward themselves, school and learning, the adults in their environment and on their future behavior.

Administrators play a crucial role in developing and implementing behavior management programs. Unless leaders actively set priorities, focus staff, and provide support, resources, and professional development opportunities, even the most well-conceived programs will have limited success (Curwin & Mendler, 1988; De Bevoise, 1984; Jones, 1987). Administrators must engage in communication, problem solving, team building, morale building, and quality control, rather than relying on mandates and policy directives to effect change. The goal is to have faculty working together with clear goals, maximum involvement, careful planning, and close coordination of efforts. Administrators also set a tone that encourages teachers to speak openly about their problems and challenging student behaviors without being judged weak or incompetent. They build consensus from points of agreement, while recognizing and allowing for individual differences and the varying points of view, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about discipline that are bound to exist in any faculty. Visibility, willingness to confront and deal with difficult problems, active commitment to shared decision making, and treatment of all with dignity and respect are characteristics essential to an administrator in establishing a climate that supports positive behavior management.

This chapter describes considerations for administrators in designing positive management programs to prevent inappropriate student behaviors, foster the development of student responsibility, and respond to behavior problems in a way that supports students and promotes their learning of appropriate social and classroom behavior. The chapter is organized around the following key questions:

1. **What constitutes positive behavior management?**
2. **What are guiding principles and specific strategies to foster positive, responsible student behavior?**
3. **How do school leaders implement a more positive approach to management?**

## 1. WHAT CONSTITUTES POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT?

According to Wayson and Lasley (1984), schools with effective, positive management systems are distinguished by "a sense of community marked by mutually agreed upon behavioral norms [that] surround students with examples of acceptable behaviors and provide subtle rewards and sanctions that encourage students to behave appropriately" (p. 419). Positive management is one element of a school climate characterized by positive teacher-student and peer relationships, fulfillment of students' personal and psychological needs, effective organization, effective instruction, and a variety of techniques that encourage student self-control (Jones & Jones, 1990). Administrators, teachers, and support staff consistently make clear to students that belonging, respect, service, and learning are valued in the school setting.

Positive behavior management also represents a decided departure from traditional concepts of discipline. The word discipline generally connotes a variety of punishments used in hopes of correcting behavioral problems (Rosell, 1986). Traditional discipline systems focus on external control of students and often punitive measures to decrease inappropriate behavior. Shame, ridicule, sarcasm, humiliation, dwelling on past behavior, and exclusion are frequently associated with such systems, which are self-defeating and nonproductive.

Positive behavior management, in contrast, is proactive, preventative, and designed to foster self-control and increase appropriate student behavior. Student problems are responded to with positive support rather than punishment. Instead of relying on power and punitive models of behavior control, schools with positive behavior management systems share decision making to maintain a school climate that promotes self-discipline. The ultimate responsibility for choosing the correct behavior rests with the student. The objective is to teach appropriate social and academic behavior and responsible decision making, rather than to punish undesirable behavior and leave the development of positive behavior to chance. Positive behavior management may initially involve more work; take longer to produce results; and force personnel to examine how they may be contributing to discipline problems by failing to motivate, embarrassing students, and denying them choices or opportunities for expression. In the long run, however, positive management systems encourage better teaching and learning, decision making, and critical thinking as well as more appropriate behavior (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

**Assumptions**

Positive behavior management is based on the premise that students whose needs are being met and who feel safe, accepted, cared for, recognized, and involved in school engage in more appropriate behavior (Glasser, 1985; Grossman; 1990; Jones & Jones, 1990). Negative behavior is a result of individuals not having their needs met in the environment in which the misbehavior occurs or of not having the skills to respond appropriately to events in their environment. Understanding students' needs helps educators understand student behavior, be less defensive in the face of inappropriate conduct, and be more open to considering program adjustments that better meet students' needs and ensure success.

Many authors and theorists have enumerated basic student needs that must be met in order for students to behave in a positive, productive manner. Some of the most widely quoted include Glasser (1985), who focused on the needs to survive, belong and love, gain power, be free, and have fun. Similarly, Coopersmith (1967) considered a sense of significance (being valued by others), competence (being able to perform a socially valued task), and power (being able to control one's environment) as essential for self-esteem. Maslow's (1975) proposed hierarchy of needs from the most basic physiological needs, to safety and security, to belonging and affection, to self-respect, to self-actualization also underscored the idea that success and achievement are possible only after more basic needs have been met.

Needs-based theories of behavior relate directly to many of the purported causes of school discipline problems, including student boredom, powerlessness, unclear limits, a lack of acceptable outlets for feelings, a reduced sense of security and stability, and attacks on student dignity (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Educators can identify student needs by examining theories such as those already mentioned and the associated research, asking students what they need to feel more comfortable and better able to learn, and systematically observing students in various situations throughout the school day (Jones & Jones, 1990).

In addition to knowing their students and the students' needs, educators must know themselves as people with beliefs and values, strengths and weaknesses, and biases that influence how they deal with students and their behavior. As is true with students, different cultural backgrounds, value systems, and personalities can greatly affect how educators perceive and respond to behaviors and situations in their environment (Grossman, 1990). For example, emphasis on tolerance or consideration, cooperation or competition, and expression or silent acceptance in a teacher's background may influence the teacher's perceptions of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behavior and when and what intervention is necessary. Similarly, a teacher's values (e.g., the rights of the individual vs. the rights of the group, respect for a teacher as an authority figure vs. liking for a teacher as an approachable mentor, promptness vs. quality of assignments) will influence the degree to which the teacher considers a student's behavior problematic. Teachers and administrators need to be aware of their values and how their backgrounds, cultures, and personalities influence perceptions of and responses to student behavior. Frank discussions of problem behaviors and preferred interventions among school personnel provide a forum for exploring values, perspectives, and beliefs about behavior management. Interviewing students to find out how they perceive class rules, procedures, social patterns, and classroom management can also yield valuable information for the reflective teacher.

Another assumption related to positive behavior management is that school personnel are willing to problem solve collaboratively and accept responsibility for teaching students more acceptable attitudes and behaviors, rather than seeking to remove disruptive students from their educational program. As a professional associated with one of the Comer schools stated:

> *Our assumption is that virtually any human problem can be solved if people are willing to meet on a consistent basis, explore and develop solutions -- without placing blame -- develop interventions, and expend the energy necessary to implement and monitor them. Hard work, along with passionate belief in human growth and potential, must characterize each school. No short, sweet, easy approach will work.* (Smith & Joyner, 1991, p. 9)

### Benefits of a Positive Approach to Management versus Punitive Discipline

Punitive discipline severely limits the range of options pursued by school personnel in response to student behaviors. Techniques such as suspension and expulsion put students at greater risk for truancy and dropping out, resulting in missed learning opportunities, which add to students' problems and expose unsupervised students to the dangers of the streets (Grice, 1986). Not only out-of-school suspension, but also many in-school suspension programs, home-bound instruction, shortened school days, and ignored truancy serve to exclude students from their primary school environment (Grosenick & Huntze, 1984). In addition, some of these disciplinary practices may violate legal provisions of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476), such as the right to a free, appropriate public education, the right to prescribed procedures prior to change of placement, and the right to an education in the least restrictive environment (Rose, 1988).

Punitive techniques have also been shown to have only limited and short-term effects on inappropriate behavior (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). In addition, punishment generates anxiety, hostility, resentment, and a decrease in positive motivation among individuals who are punished (Kerr & Nelson, 1989; Walker & Shea, 1991). Thus, it makes sense to implement a more effective mode of behavioral intervention to prevent the negative consequences of punitive discipline.

A more positive approach to behavior management holds great promise for altering negative behaviors that consume so much of teachers', administrators', and students' time and energy -- for "turning around" deteriorating situations in the schools. There are numerous and compelling reasons to take a more positive approach to behavior management. Documented benefits include the following:

- Less student isolation, alienation, hostility, and frustration.
- Fewer suspensions and expulsions.
- Less violent behavior.
- Less disruptive classroom behavior.
- Less vandalism.
- Improved morale among students and staff.
- Improved attendance.
- Greater student achievement.
- Development of students' prosocial skills and responsible behavior.

As Green and Uroff (1989) summarized, typical approaches to behavior management "won't help at-risk students by merely stepping up programs that have failed them in the past -- by creating tougher academic standards, a longer school day and year, and more homework. Instead we must focus our efforts on the students themselves" (p. 81). Positive behavior management is an attempt to maintain this focus.

### Hallmarks of Positive Behavior Management Systems

A review of the literature reveals several essential characteristics of positive behavior management systems that account for their effectiveness. Individual school programs will vary in how they accomplish these elements, but all are critical to successful management.

Programs in a comprehensive positive behavior management system are based on and responsive to documented and perceived needs of students.

Students who are at risk for failure, as well as those labeled as having emotional/behavioral disabilities, demonstrate a continuum of challenging behaviors ranging from mild to serious acting out and aggression. Because there is a need to change behavior at all points along this continuum and the needs of students are diverse, a variety of programs and alternatives (discussed later in this chapter) must be made available. No single approach will work with all students. The goal is to respond to student behavior in a way that will result in learning on the student's part while maintaining an undisrupted school climate for the rest of the students. Programming must be responsive to students' needs and interests. Curricula must have personal relevance and utility for students, helping them to negotiate the challenges they face in their world. Academic success is necessarily a focus, but the curriculum must also promote security, caring, responsibility, and prosocial skills.

Many of the resources listed in Appendix A include checklists that teachers and specialists can use to evaluate their personal instructional and management styles and to determine how well their classroom environment matches the needs of their students. The remaining resources facilitate assessment of how well school curricula meet student needs that go beyond traditional academic subjects.

Leadership fosters and sustains positive school values and management.

Instructional leaders in positive management systems articulate, promote, and protect positive beliefs and actions that are congruent with the school's value system. Administrators help teachers experience professional autonomy and enable students to value learning. They bring out the best in their staff and the students and help them to believe in themselves. This calls for leaders to collaborate with others in the school community by discussing, informing, persuading, team building, and building consensus and by sharing power, decision making, and recognition. It also calls for the realization that principals and supervisors cannot solve problems for people; rather they need to facilitate groups in solving their own problems and secure resources to support them in these efforts.

Students, parents, teachers, and support staff are actively involved in goal setting and decision making and feel a commitment to the resulting policies, goals, and decisions.

Involvement to identify organizational and student needs and problems and to suggest solutions to these problems should be broad based and long term. There should be mechanisms (e.g., workgroups, representation on key committees, community nights) for ongoing communication with and input from parents, teachers, and other staff in shaping the overarching school policies and goals. Students' input is also crucial for successful program development. They must be made to feel that adults are working with them in setting goals and action plans, not doing things to them.

Policies and goals should be general enough to be flexible, yet concrete enough to be clearly understood by all. Goals must also be diffused and promoted among the various constituencies or stakeholder groups. Slogans or aphorisms (e.g., "Success for All" or "Together We Will Achieve") are frequently used to exemplify and promote the overriding values and goals of a school setting (Wayson & Lasley, 1984).

Principles and rules of conduct are clearly delineated.

Principles define the general attitudes and expectations for long-term behavioral growth (e.g., "Be responsible," "Care for others"). They provide an understanding of the value of rules. Rules are more specific, are enforceable, and follow logically from principles (e.g., "Come to class prepared," "Avoid physical contact with peers") (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Schools need to plan specific ways in which administrators, teachers, and support staff will instruct and enable students to meet the rules and expectations set forth. Poorly developed and enforced rules lead to discipline problems. Rules that are (a) carefully developed with broad-based input to engage broad-based commitment, (b) clearly and positively stated, (c) systematically taught and practiced, and (d) reviewed and revised as needed are most effective in preventing discipline problems, decreasing the severity of management problems, and handling conflicts in a fair manner. Student involvement in establishing rules for the classroom and school, as well as consequences for breaking rules, can greatly enhance students' sense of efficacy and belonging to the school and their commitment to the standards set forth.

Rules should tell students what to do, instead of merely stating limitations on behavior (e.g., "Follow teacher requests" instead of "Do not disobey"; "Speak positively to others" instead of "No name calling"; "Walk in the halls" instead of "No running"). In addition, rules should be few in number so they will be easy to remember. They should represent essential expectations that shape and guide the development of informal rules at the classroom level. Expectations must be high, but not unreasonable. Evening workshops for parents, classroom time and activities for students, and workshops for teaching staff and school monitors are ways to share understandings of school rules and expectations with the school community.

Respect and caring are modeled for students by school personnel at every level.

Students are treated with respect and dignity by administrators, teachers, specialists, and support personnel. They are talked with and about in a manner that communicates respect and are made to feel an integral part of their school. Stress is placed on the development of autonomy and individual responsibility by students. Problem behaviors are addressed through approaches that emphasize the use of nonaversive techniques and support for students in changing their behaviors. Students are shown how to relate to their peers and adults through the example of how they are treated by school personnel.

Students feel a sense of belonging, ownership, and caring for their school.

There is common recognition that every individual is important and has something to contribute. The school environment and behavior management systems should promote success, encourage teachers and students to feel good about themselves, and maintain a culture conducive to learning.

## 2. WHAT ARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO FOSTER POSITIVE, RESPONSIBLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR?

Because student needs and school situations vary, no one program can address all needs and settings adequately. The following strategies represent components of approaches that have been implemented in a variety of schools at different levels with documented success. The administrator must carefully assess the existing behavior management system and make alterations and/or additions based on the needs of students and the nature of current programs. Multidimensional, positive, and individualized systems are the most likely to influence student behaviors. Combinations of the following strategies or approaches to best suit student populations in particular settings are strongly recommended.

Clearly articulate school values and clarify expectations.

All groups involved with the school should receive printed copies of policy manuals explaining school philosophy, values, rules, and regulations that have been developed by school and community representatives. Students should be informed of their personal rights, public responsibilities, and the consequences for inappropriate behavior. All students -- especially those who are new to the school -- should receive sufficient, intensive orientation at the beginning of the school year or when they transfer into the school. Orientation should delineate resources (e.g, peer support groups, tutoring programs, mentorships, enrichment activities) available to assist and support them. These services should be coordinated with the school's traditional counseling services.

Establish personal relationships with students.

Every student should have at least one staff member, teacher, or administrator assigned to or selected by the student who acts as his or her mentor, guide, and advisor. The objective is to provide ready access to a concerned adult who can assist the student in solving academic and personal problems. This person helps students -- especially those with chronic discipline problems -- to secure services such as tutoring, support groups, or counseling. He or she also encourages students to participate in extracurricular activities and to develop positive relationships with other students. Some schools allow students to remain with their advisors/mentors for longer than one school year, because many students who are at risk and many from low-income families take longer to become comfortable with and motivated by adults associated with the school setting. Ongoing relationships with trusted and caring adults add stability to students' lives that have often been marked by a high degree of instability and separation.

Increase student involvement and leadership.

As previously mentioned, students can play an important role in developing classroom and school rules and consequences. Students may also be involved in decision making through mechanisms such as student leadership programs, wherein groups of students meet with teachers and administrators to work on problems such as absenteeism, truancy, vandalism, and low achievement. Student groups can launch campaigns (e.g., "Keep our school safe") using assembly programs, daily announcements, posters, and slide shows to stimulate participation. Student involvement can also be promoted by broadening co-curricular programs to allow and encourage all students to participate. Many schools have increased the number of team sports and extracurricular activities they offer. Schoolwide themes or units (e.g., the Olympics, mysteries, cultural heritage) are also used to focus student activities and promote a sense of unity throughout the school. Increased student participation in school life can be stimulated by enrichment activities such as symposia, all-cultures festivals, exchange programs, field trips, assemblies, or a Model Congress or United Nations.

Villa and Thousand (1990) have described additional ways that students can be involved in the school community. Students may serve as members of instructional teams through cooperative learning activities and/or as members of teacher-student learning teams. Peer tutoring programs and cross-age teaching, in which older students work with younger students or classes are combined for certain aspects of instruction, are additional ways to involve students in meaningful school activities. Students may assist in determining accommodations for classmates with special needs or provide feedback to teachers regarding the effectiveness of instruction. Peer support networks to establish "buddies" in mainstream classes can assist students who may be feeling isolated.

Students may also become more involved in planning their own learning experiences. An educational planning strategy designed to increase students' control and active participation in their own learning has been developed by VanReusen, Bos, Schumaker, and Deshler (1987). Students learn to analyze their strengths, weaknesses, goals, and choices for learning and to share this information with teachers, administrators, and related service personnel during planning conferences. This allows them input into their own instructional programming. Student interest inventories, learning style preference checklists, and learning profiles, such as those suggested by Mercer and Mercer (1989), Wiener (1986), and Wood (1984) (see Appendix A), can easily be adapted to this process by involving the student in responding and planning based on the identified personal and classroom variables assessed.

Showcase student talents, accomplishments, and improvements.

Schools can prominently display students' work from a variety of classes and projects. Displays of photos, slides, and student products are one way to highlight strengths and talents. These exhibits may be exchanged among schools. Regularly scheduled student assemblies can also be used to celebrate students' successes and talents in writing, poetry, song, and dance. Some schools also showcase students' artistic talents and expression by allowing them to paint or decorate school hallways or other areas of the building.

Many schools have set up reward systems for recognizing students who exemplify desired and improved behavior. These systems may include commendation letters from teachers and administrators to students and their parents; reinforcement periods with music, group games, and food; special field trips; school privileges; and prizes furnished by community businesses (e.g., movie tickets, dinners, merchandise).

Provide access to support groups for various needs.

Teachers and administrators can work with community agencies such as social services and community mental health services to develop on-campus support groups for students with alcohol and substance abuse problems, children of alcoholic parents, teenage parents, students who have been physically or sexually abused, and others who could benefit from peer support groups. The nature of these groups depends on the needs of students in any given setting.

At the classroom level, regularly scheduled weekly or semiweekly classroom meetings can serve as a forum for student expression, problem solving, and support (Glasser, 1969). Students can bring up issues that arise in the classroom (e.g., cheating, violence in the school, class cohesiveness, distractions, class rules) or more open-ended topics (e.g., prejudice, environmental issues, peer pressure) that promote higher-level thinking, exchange of ideas, and understanding. Meetings may also be focused on program and curricular decisions (e.g., homework, unit topics, grading practices) to provide a vehicle for student input. A procedure for setting goals, planning actions, and determining support responsibilities is also a part of the meeting. Ground rules for conducting the meeting (e.g., "One person speaks at a time"; "Everyone gets a chance to express his or her opinion"; "No put-downs or name calling") should also be agreed on.

Provide expedited access to academic, advising, and counseling services.

Conferences should be used extensively as a preventative strategy. In meetings with advisors, school psychologists, counselors, administrators, parents, or teachers, rules and expectations should be clarified and student concerns identified. Different levels of available services can also be delineated. In these sessions, students can describe potential problems with teachers, peers, or classes and are assisted in problem solving while the situations are still manageable. They learn to anticipate difficulties and use available resources before problems escalate to crisis levels.

Provide instruction in coping skills.

Silverman, Zigmond, and Sansone (1981) called these coping skills "school survival skills" and included behavioral self-control, teacher-pleasing behaviors (e.g., eye contact, responding, following rules), and study skills (e.g., listening, organization, note taking, test taking) as critical curricula for students lacking these skills or those who are at risk for school failure. Teachers or specialists can also help students identify emotions associated with negative behaviors and loss of control; recognize and monitor these feelings of anger, frustration, depression, or fear; and develop a plan to prevent loss of control and to cope more constructively. Classes in success and self-esteem, communication, psychology, critical issues confronting students in their daily lives, learning strategies, and social skills development have also proved beneficial to many students when the skills learned in class are integrated, practiced, and reinforced throughout the school. Resources to assist needs assessment in planning student support programs are listed in Appendix A.

Design staff development activities to promote more positive approaches to behavior management.

Teacher training in group processes, conflict resolution, learning styles, communication skills, effective discipline, problem-solving skills, clarifying expectations and consequences, stating rules, and developing behavioral contracts has been found to be very helpful in increasing teachers' confidence and effectiveness in dealing with difficult behaviors and promoting more responsible behavior in their classrooms. These efforts require ongoing support, continued commitment, followup, and encouragement from school administrators, as do most of the other strategies in this chapter. One-day or short-term inservice programs will not lead to lasting behavioral change on the part of students or teachers.

Use additional personnel or redefine roles of existing personnel to facilitate day-to-day implementation of positive behavior management.

Administrators must ensure the availability of sufficient staff to implement programs effectively. Some schools enlist the services of school-community aides to monitor the halls and school building; identify trespassers; and head off fights, vandalism, and other negative acts. Even more important, these aides are dedicated to establishing positive rapport with students and serve as a source of support to them.

For example, in schools that have adopted the Positive Alternatives to School Suspension (PASS) program, a PASS coordinator is hired or appointed to provide supportive services to students -- especially those at risk -- and to redirect student activities toward more positive behavior. This is accomplished through counseling, identification of academic difficulties, and consequences that isolate highly disruptive students but do not put them at higher risk with out-of-school suspension. Other coordinator responsibilities include arranging parent-faculty conferences and classroom visits to assist teachers or to provide direct services to students; monitoring classwork of students removed from class to the PASS resource room; networking with resource specialists; and linking faculty with multicultural/multiethnic resources at the district level. The coordinator also conducts parent meetings regarding the PASS system; makes presentations to groups; updates parents on student progress by telephone; coordinates guest speakers for staff development; works with community agencies to develop resources and services outside of school (e.g., parent workshops); and links parents with resources. The coordinated services that comprise the PASS program have been documented as effective in reducing negative student behavior and promoting an atmosphere more conducive to learning for all students (Grice, 1986).

Make increased use of collaborative structures such as teacher or multidisciplinary assistance teams, consultation, and cooperative teaching to address behavior problems and target positive interventions.

Many of the recently developed collaborative alternatives to pull-out service delivery for students needing special education can also be used to support students with chronic behavioral or academic problems (Laycock, Gable, & Korinek, 1991). In these approaches, pairs or groups of individuals with diverse backgrounds combine their expertise to identify problems and needs, brainstorm interventions, develop action plans for improving student performance, and follow up on outcomes of all interventions. Collaborative approaches also provide support and informal staff development for the adult participants involved in the process.

Provide an alternative class for students who are failing.

Students who are failing are often disruptive. Some schools (e.g., Grice, 1986; Smith & Joyner, 1991 ) have established alternative classes where work can be completed under the supervision of specially selected teachers. Instruction in this classroom may also be designed to help students develop more effective coping skills and more positive ways of viewing themselves as learners. These classes are short-term alternatives for students to help them get back on track. They are not intended to be an ongoing or long-term form of special education that removes students from mainstream classes.

Ensure that classroom-based behavior management techniques emphasize positive, proactive, learner-based techniques for shaping appropriate behavior.

Some of these techniques may include the following:

- Class rules that are positively worded, few in number, realistic, clear, and promote behaviors central to a positive learning environment.

- Weekly progress reports from general and special education teachers that are charted and discussed with students.

- Individualized behavioral contracts that clearly delineate expected behaviors and consequences. Contracts should be negotiated with the students and commitments to the contract provisions obtained prior to implementation. Administrators can help to ensure that resources are available to support contingencies arranged in the contracts.

- Reliance on natural consequences logically connected to the behavior, rather than artificial consequences (e.g., academic work used as punishment or removal of students from the classroom). Expulsion and suspension cannot be applied to students in special education without careful adherence to due process regulations.

- Point, level, or token systems heavily weighted toward students earning points and privileges for engaging in appropriate behavior rather than losing points for misbehavior. Students who lose all their points early in the day or have little chance of earning the designated reinforcers quickly opt out of the system and continue or escalate their resistant behaviors.

Additional suggestions for promoting positive behavior are listed in Appendix B.

## 3. HOW DO SCHOOL LEADERS IMPLEMENT A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT?

The following best practices based on successful programs, recommendations from Phi Delta Kappan's Commission on Discipline (Wayson & Lasley, 1984), and a review of other current literature are offered to administrators to facilitate their efforts in implementing a more positive management system in their schools. Appendix C lists more specific suggestions for administrative actions that help promote more positive behavior management.

### Establish a broad-based, collaborative planning group.

Current literature in program development and systems change stresses the importance of involving all parties who will be affected by the change in the design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of any new program or initiative. The instructional leader organizes and facilitates this group in developing a specific plan for implementing more positive behavior management strategies on the school level. The plan identifies goals of the program, specific steps needed to implement the approach, roles and responsibilities of participants, required resources, and evaluation of effectiveness. Subsequent department- or grade-level teams may be mobilized to help with implementation on the classroom level.

Reach consensus regarding the underlying program philosophy and mission.

Philosophical agreement must be reached on the basic purpose of the program and the assumptions under which it will operate (e.g., student support/education rather than punishment; prevention rather than just reaction to behavior). The philosophy of positive behavior management serves as the foundation upon which all other decisions regarding the program are made.

Conduct a needs analysis to establish baseline data regarding the attitudes, perceptions, practices, and outcomes related to the current system.

The most accurate picture of what is happening in a particular setting can be obtained by collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources such as students, parents, teachers, support staff, and other relevant parties regarding various facets of the overall program most directly related to behavior management efforts. These data may include but are not limited to the following:

- Parent, student, and teacher perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction with current school programs, behavior management practices, and innovations being considered.
- Student grades.
- Attendance.
- Dropout and grade retention rates.
- Referrals to the office.
- Occurrences of in- and out-of-school suspensions and breakdown according to reason and race/ethnicity (to determine whether certain groups of students are being treated differentially).
- Incidents of vandalism and aggression.
- Behavior problems occurring in class as opposed to outside of class.
- Punishments applied to students and rate of repeated offenses.
- Videotaped or direct observation of classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and playground behavior.
- Numbers of students participating in extra- and co-curricular activities.
- Numbers of students participating in counseling, support groups, tutoring programs, and other student support activities.
- Numbers of parents involved in school programs.

Specific skill areas and behaviors and social skills of students needing support can be assessed using resources such as those listed in Appendixes A and D.

Build on existing structures or program elements that support positive behavior management.

Certain classroom or school wide programs that support students in developing responsible behavior (such as those mentioned previously) may already be operative.

The administrator can facilitate identification of these programs or techniques and seek out key personnel to spread the word, serve as models, provide the foundation, and extend these programs to support additional students and teachers. Further innovations should build on existing structures that have already proved successful and are supported by staff.

Combine positive behavior management alternatives to enhance service delivery.

The combination of several complementary alternatives is likely to be most effective in meeting a range of student needs and staff styles (e.g., student-to-student support in the form of peer tutoring or support groups combined with adult-to-student support alternatives such as mentorships or counseling services). In addition, the integral link between positive behavior management and effective instruction that motivates students and enables them to be successful learners (covered in other chapters in this manual) cannot be ignored.

Ensure that all personnel have the necessary skills or receive training to participate effectively in positive management programs.

All personnel, from administrators responsible for program leadership to teachers to paraprofessionals and other support staff, must be versed in the philosophy and techniques identified as essential to positive behavior management. Untrained personnel can seriously undermine efforts to establish a more positive approach. Administrator participation in training, rather than mandating that teachers and staff participate without the support of the administrator, sends a powerful message regarding the importance of the staff development effort. As previously mentioned, training must be of sufficient intensity and duration, with followup provided if actual changes in practice are expected to take place.

Adapt strategies and programs to fit local needs and resources.

Model programs that have been implemented in other schools generally require modification to meet unique local needs. The characteristics of the students, staff, and setting will influence the selection and modification of management structures, and selected structures are likely to stimulate new ideas and strategies as they are implemented.

Make ongoing evaluation the basis for decisions and program modifications.

By collecting and using information similar to that suggested for needs assessment throughout the design and implementation of the program, the planning team will be able to validate the selection of strategies, work out problems, and promote the program with school personnel and other members of the school community.

Recognize that a more positive approach to behavior management may represent a change for school personnel that requires ongoing staff development and support.

Change is a process that takes time. Resistance, disagreements, and periods of uncertainty are a normal part of this process. People require training in the new techniques, information, resources, support, and some assertive pressure from their leaders to make meaningful and lasting changes. Working with the planning team, the school administrator must provide the leadership and support over an extended period of time to effect this change.

## SUMMARY

This chapter presented ideas and suggestions regarding the development and maintenance of more positive behavior management programs in schools. Administrators have a central leadership role in the movement away from punitive, exclusive forms of discipline toward more supportive, instructional, and preventative behavior management programs. Given the ever-increasing numbers of students at risk for school failure and the escalation of school violence and other disruptive acts, it is imperative that instructional leaders take positive action to reverse these disturbing trends. Many promising alternatives exist for those committed to fostering positive student behavior by being more directly supportive to students.

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# APPENDIX A

## Resources for Informal Needs Assessment for Planning Student Support Programs

## Resources for Informal Needs Assessment for Planning Student Support Programs

| Source | Areas Addressed |
|---|---|
| Curwin & Mendler (1988) | Behavior management inventory, school discipline survey. |
| Englert (1984) | Classroom management, instructional presentation, classroom organization. |
| Hoover (1988) | Study skills -- Reading rate, listening, notetaking/outlining, report writing, oral presentations, graphic aids, test taking, library usage, reference/dictionary usage, time management, self-management. |
| Mercer & Mercer (1989) | Learner expectancies, teacher expectancies, peer expectancies, parental expectancies, physical properties, instructional arrangements, instructional techniques, materials, learning style preferences, student responses, teacher feedback. |
| Robinson, Braxdale, & Colson (1985) | Listening, self-management, record keeping, reading content for comprehension, test taking, interactive learning. |
| Salend & Viglianti (1982) | Classroom variables analysis -- instructional materials and support personnel, presentation of subject matter, learner response variables, classroom management, and physical design. |
| Silverman, Zigmond, & Sansone (1981) | Study skills including using the text, note taking, homework, test taking, listening, bringing materials, and following directions; academics including reading, mathematics, and writing; behaviors including punctuality, staying in seat, attending, and peer interactions. |
| Wiener (1986) | Classroom demands and evaluation procedures, questions on essay/project/report writing, test preparation and test taking, note taking, and gaining information from text. |
| SAALE<br>Wood (1988) | Social/emotional/behavioral environment, physical environment, instructional environment including teaching, media, content, and evaluation techniques. |
| TIES<br>Ysseldyke & Christenson (1987) | Classroom environment, teacher expectations, cognitive emphasis, motivational strategies, relevant practice, academic engaged time, feedback, adaptive instruction, progress evaluation, instructional planning, and student understanding. |

# APPENDIX B

## Classroom Strategies for Promoting Positive Student Behavior

## Classroom Strategies for Promoting Positive Student Behavior

1. "Catch kids being good" -- reward desirable behavior rather than focusing attention on inappropriate behaviors and continual reminders.
2. Vary reinforcers -- social, activity, and tangible.
3. Keep students interested, involved, and successful on a daily basis.
4. Incorporate physical activity into lessons or alternate active and quiet lessons.
5. Structure student choices related to various aspects of their school day (e.g., order of assignments, response modes, reading selections, study partners, research topics).
6. Model organization and respect in interactions with students.
7. Design activity, media, or special interest centers.
8. Redirect students who are off task rather than reprimanding students and thereby focusing attention on off-task behavior.
9. Ignore irritating behavior to the extent possible. Instead, encourage a student who is demonstrating the desired behavior within earshot of the student demonstrating off-task behavior.
10. Use proximity control. Move about the classroom supervising student work, assisting students before they get frustrated, and encouraging students to remain on task with your presence.
11. Use signals that do not disrupt the entire class or embarrass students (e.g., thumbs up/thumbs down, colored note cards) to cue appropriate behavior.
12. Have an "I need help" signal that students can post at their desks during seatwork when they need teacher assistance to proceed and individualized "turn to" activities (e.g., journal writing, math facts, spelling practice) that the student can turn to while waiting for help.
13. Use peer helpers and models in the classroom.
14. Make study carrels available to students who need a quiet setting to complete their work or calm down from an upsetting event.

15. Use a kitchen timer to set specific work periods, and clarify consequences for students engaging in appropriate behavior during these periods. The timer can also be set at random intervals. Students who are on-task when the timer rings may be rewarded.

16. Provide checklists for self-evaluation of assignments, behaviors, tasks, and materials to promote student independence and self-evaluation.

17. Have students count/monitor their own target behaviors. Identify with the student the behaviors needing to be changed and model how to keep track of these behaviors. Gradually have the student assume responsibility for counting and charting his or her behavior. Discuss progress regularly.

18. Show an interest in and attend to student activities outside the classroom.

19. Have lunch with individual students to share personal interests, or arrange times to meet one-to-one with students.

20. Use a suggestion box and encourage students to write their ideas for making the classroom a better place in which to learn.

21. Use a compliment box and encourage students to notice appropriate behaviors and write down positive comments about their peers.

22. Announce or post the daily schedule so that students can be prepared. Alert students to changes in the schedule in advance, if possible.

23. Always have an alternate activity planned for those times that a lesson or activity is going poorly (marked by student disruption and lack of interest). Be flexible in restructuring these activities or postponing them until another time.

24. Use role playing to help students practice appropriate responses to verbal or physical attacks, frustrating situations, and peer pressure.

25. Refer to the chapter text for strategies involving classroom meetings, contracts, rules, and point systems.

# APPENDIX C

## Administrative Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior Management

## Administrative Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior Management

1. Recognize that faculty members have a variety of values and use multiple strategies to manage behavior. Do not force teachers to use consequences that do not fit their personalities or teaching situations.

2. Help teachers identify their strengths so they can build upon these strengths in making improvements.

3. Organize work groups or task forces on the various causes of in-school misbehavior. Each group comprises teachers, parents, students, and administrators and is charged with developing a specific plan of action in response to a specific cause or causes. The plan is tailored to the school (i.e. who will do exactly what and when and how it will be evaluated).

4. Establish support groups for teacher discussion of discipline and challenging behaviors and focus on adapting practical strategies. Give credit for participation as you would for other committee assignments.

5. Be visible in the halls, cafeteria, and classrooms and at the bus stop. Frequently check with staff to see how programs are progressing.

6. Clarify the administrator's role when students break a rule (i.e., what will be done when a student is sent to the office). Elicit a plan of action from the referred student.

7. Help staff differentiate motivation from discipline problems. Coach them in developing motivational skills and improving instruction. Give examples in concrete terms.

8. Give teachers the freedom and security to make mistakes.

9. Facilitate the development of school wide contracts with consequences (not punishments) that are clear, natural, logical, and instructive and provide a range of alternatives that address the behavior but preserve student dignity.

10. Ensure that students are tested on school rules that have been developed with input from and agreement by all groups within the school.

11. Help teachers share effective consequences (i.e., what behaviors, what consequences, when used, with whom). Publish specific suggestions.

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*Based on Curwin and Mendler (1988) and other sources listed in references.*

12. Model effective implementation of consequences. Do not lecture, scold, moralize, accept excuses, or make a public display of students or teachers.

13. Continually strive to involve parents and families. Keep them informed through meetings, special events, and publications. Elicit their input and solutions to problems.

14. Be there for faculty to actively listen and try to support them. Acknowledge that you do not know how to solve all problems but will work with your faculty to problem solve.

15. Allow teachers freedom in dealing creatively with chronic problems as long as they use nonpunitive measures and inform you in advance.

16. Encourage all teachers to discuss their specific management plans with you.

17. Encourage experimentation, innovation, and curriculum modification to meet student needs.

18. Reward faculty efforts to be more positive in their management and instruction with recognition, support, and other resources at your disposal.

19. Participate in training related to positive behavior management to convey the importance of the initiative and your support.

20. Seek support from other administrators who have been successful in their efforts to promote positive behavior management in other settings.

# APPENDIX D

## Commercial Programs/Resources for Social Skills Instruction

## Commercial Programs/Resources for Social Skills Instruction

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Chapter 10

# Understanding and Implementing Secondary Education Transition Services

*Susan B. Asselin and Gary M. Clark*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the administrator with a basic understanding of transition services and how such services can be delivered effectively. This information is not meant to dictate policy, but to provide an understanding of how effective practices can result in high-quality transition programming. As with any other educational change, administrative support is crucial to delivery of secondary education transition services (Fullan, 1991; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lasko, & Fernandez, 1989; Wermuth & Phelps, 1990). Given support at the building and central office levels, teachers, students, families and human service agencies can work cooperatively to build high-quality transition programs. The following questions, commonly asked by administrators, provide the framework for the chapter:

1. **What is transition?**
2. **What linkages or collaborative efforts must be established?**
3. **How can transition planning be implemented in the IEP?**
4. **What support can administrators provide?**

## 1. WHAT IS TRANSITION?

Transition services are highly individual and defy any precise definition. However, since transition services are mandated for students with disabilities, there must be some definitional starting point. Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [20 U.S.C. 1401(a)(19)] defines transition services, in statutory terms, as

> a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests [Sec. 602(a)(19)].

This definition of transition services will be expanded to better understand the intention of IDEA and how services can be implemented. The key words in transition are *coordinated set of activities*, *outcome oriented*, and *individual student's needs*.

### Outcome-Oriented Process

Goals, objectives, instruction, and related services for transition must be planned and delivered within an outcome-oriented process. This process begins with a set of expectations or long-range goals for a student. From these future-oriented student goals or outcomes, the process works backward to needed instruction or services. This means that any aspect of the transition services component of the individualized education program (IEP) must reflect consideration of long-range goals, or what the student with disabilities is expected to know or be able to accomplish. Annual IEP goals reflect more specific objectives to be accomplished at the end of each year. These goals and objectives are reviewed annually.

### Individual Student's Needs, Preferences, and Interests

The IDEA legislation supports the notion of early transition planning for an individual with a disability. The best place to begin in transition planning is with the student, to determine needs, interests, and preferences. To accomplish this, it is important to assess individual needs. Assessments can include informal measures such as curriculum-based vocational assessment, structured interviews, inventories, observational reports, rating scales, or situational assessments, as well as more formal, standardized procedures such as adaptive behavior scales, transition behavior scales, or vocational assessment systems. Input from parents or guardians, along with student input, is critical to this process. These assessments are reflected in the present level of performance section of the IEP. Appendix A provides examples of informal and formal assessments.

While assessments of students are an important service, it is essential that the student be involved in transition planning. Transition planning should be done *with* the student not *to* the student. Active student participation in the IEP process and decision making addresses the intent of the law. In addition, youths with disabilities gain self-advocacy skills by participating in this process. IDEA is clear that transition programs and services needed by a student should be based on individual preferences and interests, *not* upon currently available programs and services.

### Coordinated Activities

Instructional programs or related services for transition specified on an IEP must be based on the goals and objectives developed and agreed upon by the IEP committee. The transition process is viewed as a shared responsibility among school personnel, students, parents, and adult services providers. For instance, a school-based case manager may be assigned to monitor the secondary transition services provided to each student. Then, the adult service agency case manager is identified before the student leaves the secondary education program. Prior to school exit, the school-based case manager determines follow-up procedures to ensure that IEP/ITP (individualized transition program) information follows the student. The student with disabilities plays a pivotal role in this process and can assist in coordination between school and adult service agencies.

## Secondary Education Transition Services

In Virginia, a Transition Services Index (Asselin, Anderson, & deFur, 1992) was developed to assist local school divisions in planning for the delivery of transition services. The categories of integration, individualized educational planning for transition, instructional programs, coordinated planning, support services, cooperation between vocational and special education, level of support, and student and parent involvement can be used as guidelines in determining what secondary transition services are possible.

Based on individual student assessments, coordinated transition services can be delivered in secondary education by one or more of the following:

- Vocational evaluation.
- General education instruction, including career exploration, vocational education, and work experience.
- Special education if it is specially designed instruction or curriculum.
- Related services, which may include one or more of the following examples:
  (1) Transportation.
  (2) Social work services.
  (3) Rehabilitation counseling.
  (4) Occupational/physical therapy.
  (5) Work adjustment.
  (6) Independent living.
- Career/transition counseling.
- Supported employment.
- Community based instruction.

Appendix B provides definition of terms commonly used in referring to transition.

## Postsecondary Transition Activities

The intent of the IDEA transition mandates is for youth with disabilities to successfully move from secondary to postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. When transition goals are being developed for the IEP, these outcomes guide specific transition planning for a student. With these outcomes in mind, the school develops linkages with adult services for employment, further education, and community living as appropriate to the student's individual goals.

## 2. WHAT LINKAGES OR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS MUST BE ESTABLISHED?

It is clear that planning and delivery of transition services for youth with disabilities cannot be accomplished without support from (a) within the school, (b) the students' families, (c) human service agencies in the community, and (d) postsecondary educators. This section examines the nature of collaboration and the roles of transition service providers within the school, the home, and adult agencies. More specifically, the following factors contribute to successful collaboration:

- Decisions are made by persons who care about and are committed to students with disabilities.
- Emphasis is on problem solving, flexibility, and innovativeness.
- A clear commitment for local collaboration comes from the top down and the bottom up.
- Written ongoing roles and responsibilities are developed to sustain organizational relationships even when personnel changes occur within one or more of the agencies.
- Assurance exists that local agreements are kept current and that there is a concerted effort to keep lines of communication open by maintaining active participation at regular meetings.
- Needs assessment data are collected and used.
- Sufficient staff time is allocated by agency administrators.
- Agency representatives are empowered to recommend policy.
- Agency professionals participate voluntarily.

### Local Transition Teams

Local linkages with community agencies should be established to ensure ongoing communication and coordination with schools. Local transition teams or councils are often formed as the primary means of establishing and maintaining these linkages. These councils range from a building-level team in a large district to a consortium of school districts in smaller, more rural areas. Transition team members include a full array of people concerned with secondary special education and transition programs and services in their community. They represent four basic groups: (a) people with disabilities and their families; (b) school personnel; (c) adult or human service agency personnel; and (d) members of the community such as employers, civic organization representatives, or postsecondary support service providers. See Appendix C for a listing of agencies that may be represented.

The adult service agency personnel, consumers, parents, and community members who make up the transition team or council have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Share information about eligibility requirements and regulatory policies that affect persons with disabilities.
- Establish a local referral/eligibility process for students.
- Provide information about and advocate for residential options, employment, transportation, leisure activities, case management, and financial resources.
- Be informed about IEPs, ITPs, and other agency formats for planning services for persons with disabilities.
- Facilitate and participate in formal and informal interagency agreements to coordinate service delivery to students and school leavers.
- Project service needs for the near future; develop a plan for meeting service needs.
- Describe and clarify information related to the organizational structure and function of each service program and agency.

**Special Education**

Special education as the primary secondary education transition service provider plays a pivotal role in providing transition services. Guidelines for providing transition services to students with disabilities should be related directly to the provisions in IDEA and the regulations associated with it. There are many other planning and implementation strategies that can and should be considered that represent best practices in state and local education agencies across the nation. This section provides examples from California's Transition Services Language Survival Guide (California State Department of Education, 1991) and several transition guides.

The following are specific roles of special educators:

- Acquire detailed knowledge of community agencies and resources for all student populations with disabilities.

- Elicit information from families about their goals for the future.
- Provide a supportive atmosphere for the student and family at all stages of transition planning.
- Empower the student and family in making individualized transition decisions.
- Document the transition planning process, using staffing notes extensively to keep long-range plans in mind, record ideas generated as alternatives, note potential resource persons, and document other useful information.
- Provide ongoing curriculum-based assessment of functioning level related to instructional efforts in employability, daily living, and personal-social skills.
- Ensure instruction and learning opportunities in the critical areas of transition -- work behaviors, social skills, independent living, personal management, and job skills.

**Related School Personnel**

School-based personnel, in addition to special education teachers, can assist in providing transition services and support services to students with disabilities. Two of the primary transition service providers in secondary education are vocational education teachers and school counselors.

Vocational Education Teachers. Vocational educators have been mandated in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act to provide support services that facilitate transition planning. Students with disabilities are assured the same rights, protections, and guarantees for equal access to a full range of vocational programs as nondisabled students. Vocational instruction is to be provided in the least restrictive environment with support services such as vocational assessment, instructional services (modifications and aids), guidance, counseling, and career development.

Another assurance for students with disabilities guaranteed by the Perkins Act is that planning will be coordinated among vocational education, special education, and adult service agencies. In a recent study, Anderson (1992) found that cooperation between special and vocational education had the greatest impact on the provision of transition services. The support services mandated in the vocational legislation are viewed as transition services and can be extremely helpful to special educators. More specifically, the Perkins Act states that vocational education will

> assist students who are members of special populations to enter vocational education programs, and with respect to the student with handicaps, assist in

fulfilling the transitional service requirements under section 626 of the Education of the Handicapped Act [Sec. 118(c)(1)]

and provide

counseling and instructional services designed to facilitate the transition from school to post-school employment and career opportunities. [Sec. 118(c)(5)].

This assistance includes career exploration at the middle school level and career preparation at the high school and adult levels, vocational evaluation, supervised work experience programs, and supported employment programs.

To better understand vocational education's role in the transition process, the following list describes contributions of vocational educators:

- Involvement in IEP meetings.
- Prevocational career exploration.
- Assessment of interests and competencies.
- Student-centered instructional plans within the context of a vocational curriculum.
- Supervised job placement and work experience.
- Reinforcement of academic skills through applied vocational experiences.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the real world of work experiences.
- Work experiences with nondisabled populations.
- Independent/community living skills in home economics.

Vocational/Guidance Counselors. The Perkins Act also mandates career guidance and counseling for students with disabilities. Under this provision, vocational counselors may provide personal and career counseling to students and families. The legislation further denotes that guidance, counseling, and career development activities will be provided by "professionally trained counselors and teachers who are associated with the provisions of such services" [Sec. 118(c)(4)]. Vocational evaluators who are either school based or employed in rehabilitation settings are called upon to provide not only counseling services but also vocational assessments of students with disabilities. This information is used to assist students in career planning and making instructional choices. Input from these professionals is essential to delivery of high-quality transition services.

Specific contributions of vocational/guidance counselors to the transition process include the following:

- Help students define realistic career goals.
- Help students develop self-understanding and get along with others.
- Foster career decision-making skills.
- Explore aptitudes and interests.
- Enhance students' self-advocacy and self-confidence.
- Provide information on postsecondary support services.
- Offer personal and family counseling.
- Participate in assessment teams.

### Students and Families

Transition planning and service delivery must involve students and families. The influence of families on the success of students with disabilities is well documented. Therefore, it is essential that families be involved in early discussions of transition goals related to employment, instruction, and community living. Parents and guardians are an excellent resource and support system for helping students develop independence and self-reliance at home and reinforcing social skills and consumer skills taught in school. Parents frequently become case and instructional managers for their children as they leave secondary education. They need assistance and training to become aware of what adult services are available and how to access them. In Virginia, parents can seek assistance in transition planning from several resources including Parent Resource Centers, which serve a multitude of school divisions, and Parent Education Advocacy Training (PEATC) in Northern Virginia which offers parent training, resource materials, and support.

The following list gives selected examples of the roles of parents as partners in providing transition services:

- Encourage self-reliance and independence at home.
- Help develop decision-making and communication skills.

- Encourage and facilitate social activities with peers.
- Help set realistic goals.
- Provide information about the student's life skills, interests, and aptitudes to school and agency transition planners.
- Provide opportunities for leisure time activities such as participation in sports, daily exercise, hobbies, and recreation.
- Establish positive working relationships with professionals at school and in the community, and with adult service providers.
- Formulate a vision of their son's or daughter's future in relation to employment, residential options, recreation and leisure, and personal independence and be able to express this vision in terms of specific outcomes.

### Human Service Agencies

Once a student with a disability graduates or "ages out" from high school and enters postschool employment or further education, he or she is no longer entitled to receive free and appropriate special education and services in the public schools. Instead, a myriad of adult services may be available, but only after a series of steps are taken to determine eligibility for such services. Entrance into the adult world can be quite shocking to individuals with disabilities and their families when they exit secondary education.

Vocational rehabilitation is the initial contact for many students with disabilities as they enter the adult service system and seek available services. For students with mental disabilities, the initial contact is the Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation through the local community service board. Other disability-specific referral agencies include the Department of Visually Handicapped and the Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Agencies such as Social Services, Adult and Vocational and Technical Education, Board of Rights for Virginians with Disabilities, Youth and Family Services, and the Governor's Employment and Training Division are governed by different administrative structures, funding, legislative mandates, philosophies, and even vocabulary. It is essential that administrators and special educators become cognizant of legislative requirements and funding and how they might impact students either while in school or as they make the transition from school to adulthood.

Two other pieces of legislation, The Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, have significant impact upon students with disabilities in the workplace and community. Once a student enters the world of adult services, these federal laws determine eligibility for services and guarantee certain rights for access to and equity in employment, community living, and further education.

## 3. HOW CAN TRANSITION PLANNING BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE IEP?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act added new components to the IEP that schools are responsible for documenting. This section discusses transition goals and interagency linkages and how to integrate these into the IEP document and process. It is important to recognize that the IEP for a student with disabilities is both a document and a process. More important, it functions as a dynamic, instructional, long-range planning guide. Transition goals in the IEP document are addressed specifically in the legislation. They include

> instructional, community experiences, development of employment, and appropriate interagency goals. Transition goals may also involve work related behaviors, independent living skills, transportation skills, grooming, and other skills that target a person's employability and success in the community as an adult [Sec. 300.346b].

### Transition Component

These transition goals and objectives should be entered either on the student's IEP or on an attachment to the IEP such as the individualized transition plan (ITP). The goals should reflect both transition services to be provided in secondary education and postschool outcomes. The structure or format for the transition component to the IEP should reflect the areas of need for transition services. Appendix D contains a case study and sample ITP. At a minimum, the following general areas would be included for consideration by the student, family, and professionals as they formulate goals:

- Employment.

  (1) Career planning choices.
  (2) Occupational preparation.
  (3) Employability skills.
  (4) Work experience.
  (5) Social/interpersonal skills.

- Further Education.

  (1) Career options.
  (2) Support services.
  (3) Financial aid.
  (4) Program options.

- Community living.

  (1) Leisure/recreation needs.
  (2) Living arrangements.
  (3) Personal management needs.
  (4) Community participation/services.
  (5) Advocacy/legal services.
  (6) Socialization/friendship.
  (7) Transportation.
  (8) Medical needs.

In effect, the new amendments of IDEA concerning the development of the IEP require schools to focus on outcome-oriented goals that not only include, but go beyond, academic achievement goals. For the first time, states and local education agencies must ensure that IEPs for all secondary school students with disabilities reflect future needs and preferences related to adult living.

**When to Begin**

The IEP also represents a process. Again, IDEA provides some guidelines for transition planning in the IEP. First, the Act specifies when transition goals will be included in the IEP: "a statement of needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter (and when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age 14 or younger)" [Sec. 300.18].

Best practice programs begin transition planning and instruction for students with disabilities upon entry into elementary school. The legal mandate for beginning no later than age 16 is a step forward from practices of the past, but best practice and professional judgments favor beginning no later than age 14. Any impact on dropout rates for many students with disabilities will be negligible if transition services planning does not begin until age 16.

**Participants**

The IDEA regulations require the participation of two additional types of representatives beyond those mandated in Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) for developing transition goals of the IEP. They include (a) a representative of the school responsible for providing and supervising the provision of transition services, and (b) if appropriate, a representative of each participating agency responsible for providing or paying for needed transition services.

IDEA further requires that students with disabilities participate on the IEP team. Best practice suggests that students and their parents or guardians participate actively in all aspects of IEP planning. Schools should ensure that students have the opportunity to participate in planning transition services at the IEP meeting, especially at the secondary education level. If a student does not participate in transition planning or in IEP meetings, the school must document clearly how the student's needs and preferences have been addressed in the goals and objectives beyond what a parent or guardian may have suggested.

### Interagency Linkages

IDEA further describes how outside agencies are involved in providing transition services, requiring "a statement of the needed transition services for students, including, when appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting" [Sec. 33.346b]. Furthermore, "In the case where the participating agency, other than the educational agency, fails to provide agreed upon services, the educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives" [Sec. 300.347].

The provisions of IDEA are clear that the IEP should show who or what agency is responsible for delivering the instruction or related services needed to implement transition services goals and objectives. Local linkages with state or community adult services should be established to ensure communication, coordination, and collaboration between education and agency personal. A primary thrust of IDEA is to make the education system responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities receive appropriate transition services as long as they are still enrolled in school. It puts the responsibility on the school to initiate a revised transition services plan.

## 4. WHAT SUPPORT CAN ADMINISTRATORS PROVIDE?

Administrators are responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities receive high-quality transition planning and transition services that meet the students' individual needs, interests, and preferences. This section provides guidance to administrators in collaboration, best practices, roles and responsibilities, and available resources.

### Best Practices

Administrators need to develop a knowledge of transition services and then develop community-wide networks of agencies and resources. To do this, they must be aware of and then ensure best practices in intercommunity agency and resource coordination, school-based coordination strategies, and finally coordination with parents and students. What follows is not an all-inclusive list, but it provides some guidance in planning for delivery of effective transition services.

School/Division Coordination: General Administrators

- Encourage development of interaction between regular and special educators.

- Facilitate networking of staff, students, families, and service providers.
- Provide support to teachers and staff as they implement best practices.
- Develop community and professional awareness of and support for transition programs and services.
- Involve general and vocational educators in transition services planning.
- Establish a strong commitment to serving all students with disabilities, recognizing that there is a range of levels of need.
- Encourage and facilitate inclusion in general education and the community to the maximum extent possible.

School Division Coordination: Special Education Administrators

- Develop formal contacts between school and community agencies including formal interagency agreements when necessary.
- Provide and/or facilitate staff development and information dissemination on transition services.
- Provide technical assistance on implementation of transition provisions of IDEA.
- Work closely with school-based personnel such as vocational educators, guidance personnel, and work experience coordinators in implementing transition services.
- Conduct team-building staff development activities for school and adult service personnel.
- Assist vocational evaluators in conducting formal and informal career assessments of all students with disabilities.
- Assist teachers and transition team members in exploring transition service options.
- Implement a comprehensive functional curriculum option focusing on vocational/occupational instruction, daily living and independent living skills, and personal-social skills for all students with disabilities.
- Follow up school leavers for program effectiveness or re-referral.

- Establish a school-based transition council composed of persons with disabilities, parents, adult service personnel, and members of the community.

- Meet monthly with outside agencies in adult services to establish administrative networks to enhance transition.

- Designate an individual within the school division to be responsible for coordinating transition efforts.

- Investigate related legislation such as the Rehabilitation Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act that impact transition services.

- Access services and support from the Virginia Department of Education Transition Coordinator.

Student/Parent Coordination

- Designate a case manager or transition advocate for each student.

- Provide students and families with information on transition options and resources as early as possible.

- Involve families and students in the process of assessment as well as planning.

- Provide students with instruction on how to participate in their IEP planning and the IEP meeting.

- Plan for the problems and conflicts that can come in transition services planning when a student who is 18 or older differs with parent(s) or guardian on needs, preferences, and interests.

- Annually develop and review the actual mechanics of transition services planning and delivery with families and relevant agencies.

- Assist students and families as they make transition connections with employers and community services.

### Resources

There are several sources for information and referral available to administrators in Virginia. First, the Transition Services Index (Asselin, Anderson, & deFur, 1992), under development by the Southwest Virginia Transition Center, can be used to assess the current status of transition services in an individual school division and provide guidance as priorities for services are established.

The Virginia Department of Education publication *Transition From School to Independence for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities: Information and Referral Resources* (1991) details IDEA legislation, state and federally funded transition programs, best practices information, and guidelines for planning the transition process.

If your school division is located in Southwest Virginia, you may have access to information and technical assistance from the Southwest Virginia Transition Center located at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In addition to information and referral, the Center works with adult service agencies and school divisions to establish interagency transition teams for all students with disabilities and provides inservice and parent education on transition issues. The Postsecondary Program housed at New River Community College works with transition team development and inservice education, and it also works directly with high school students to assist them in planning for entry into college programs.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a general overview of what transition is and the services needed to ensure success of students with disabilities. Strategies to establish intercommunity linkages provide tools for transition planning. Specific guidelines for implementing transition services into the IEP take transition to the practical level. Most important, the knowledge, awareness, and support of school administrators is essential. It is the responsibility of the local education agency to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate transition services, and administrators are the key supporters of this endeavor.

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# APPENDIX A

## Functional Assessment Options For Determining Interests, Preferences, and Needs

## Functional Assessment Options For Determining Interests, Preferences, and Needs

### FORMAL ASSESSMENTS*

Achievement Tests

- Brigance Inventory of Essential Skills
- Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery
- Program for Assessing Youth Employment Skills (PAYES)
- Social and Prevocational Information Battery
- Tests of Everyday Living

Aptitude Tests

- APTICOM
- Differential Aptitude Test
- General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) (U.S. Employment Service)
- Microcomputer Evaluation of Career Areas (MECA)
- Microcomputer Evaluation and Screening Assessment (MESA)
- Practical Arts Evaluation System (PAES)
- Talent Assessment Program

Interest Inventories

- AAMD-Becker Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory
- Pictorial Inventory of Careers (PIC)
- The Self-Directed Search (Form E)
- Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory
- Wide Range Interest and Opinion Test (WRIOT)

Adaptive Behavior (Daily living skills/independent living skills)

- AAMR Adaptive Behavior Scale (School Edition)
- Adaptive Behavior Scale for Children and Adults
- Independent Living Behavior Checklist
- Normative Adaptive Behavior Checklist
- Street Survival Skills Questionnaire
- Scales of Independent Behavior
- Transition Behavior Scale
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales

Commercial Work Sample Systems

- The Career Evaluation System
- Carrels for Hands-On Individualized Career Exploration (CHOICE)

Comprehensive Occupational Assessment and Training System (COATS)
McCarron-Dial Work Evaluation System
Valpar Component Work Sample Series
Vocational Information and Evaluation Work Samples (VIEWS)
Vocational Interest, Temperament, and Aptitude Scale (VITAS)

**The formal assessment instruments listed here are selected examples and should be used with any individual student only after determining reading and communication skills. Some of these instruments have a reading level that would be appropriate only for students with disabilities who have ninth grade (or better) reading comprehension. Keep in mind that planning for transition services is required for all students identified for special education or related services, which includes a wide range of intellectual and academic abilities.*

## INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Personal interviews with students
Personal interviews with parents, guardians, or others who know the student
Informal inventories or questionnaires for students
Informal inventories or questionnaires for parents or guardians
Self-report checklists for students
Functional skills rating scales or checklists for parents, guardians, or others who know the student
Observations in situational assessments (real or simulated)
Behavior analysis procedures to obtain baseline or intervention data
Kansas Competency System: Basic Skills for Employment
Learning styles assessment

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# APPENDIX B

## Definition of Terms in Transition Programs and Services

## Definition of Terms in Transition Programs and Services

**Adult services**: Adult services include support services and programs provided by both public and private agencies for persons with disabilities. Usually, these services are provided to individuals after they have exited the school system, but there are times when adult services and schools both provide needed services simultaneously. Most public adult service programs have eligibility requirements, and these vary across agencies. In Virginia, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the primary public adult service agency.

**Advocacy/legal service needs**: Students may need specific planning for transition that relates to legal advocacy for them or specific legal services they will need. IEP team members and families may need to anticipate needs of current students as adults in the areas of guardianship and conservatorship, estate planning (wills and trusts), or parent surrogates. Planning decisions made for a student with disabilities in relation to certain legal issues may affect eligibility for programs and services. Local legal services or the state advocacy and protection agency may be needed to assist the IEP team.

**Career planning options**: Students are provided with options for making tentative and ultimately realistic occupational choice decisions. Systematic provision of occupational information in coursework at school, occupational exploration opportunities through field trips and job shadowing experiences, community job samples, and summer camps (art, music, computer, etc.) are examples of career planning options.

**Community participation options**: Students are provided opportunities to learn and develop age-appropriate life skills in real-life settings. Community-based experiences could include job training, job or work sample tryouts, living skills instruction, community survival skills, job search and application skills, leisure or recreational skills, and so forth. Instruction and experiences are acquired outside of the school environment.

**Employment/job training options**: Employment and job training options vary widely due to student interests, needs, and abilities as well as available employment and training placement alternatives in a community. Planning by the IEP team should consider employment/job training options for an individual after addressing age, interests, aptitudes, motivation, current functioning level of skills, specific requirements and demands of available placements, transportation issues, and support systems necessary. Employment/job training options include job shadowing, volunteer work, in-school jobs, on-the-job training, supported employment models, and competitive employment.

**Financial assistance/support**: Eligibility for certain programs are based on the individual characteristics and needs of each student. Some of the procedures for obtaining financial support are cumbersome and involve lengthy application periods. Planning may focus on need for Social Security Income, Social Security Disability Benefits, Survivor's Benefits, food stamps, HUD Section 8 low-income housing eligibility, Medicaid, public health services, and so forth.

**Functional curriculum**: A functional curriculum is a purposefully designed program of instruction that focuses on teaching specific skills in daily living, personal and social interactions, and employability. Each individual student will have unique preferences and needs, which requires individualization of the functional curriculum and instruction. Functional curriculum instruction will occur both within and outside of the school setting.

**Functional evaluation**: A functional evaluation or assessment process is an organized approach to determining the interests, needs, preferences, and abilities that an individual student has in the domains of daily living skills, personal-social skills, and occupational/employability skills. It is a continuous process, using both formal and informal assessment procedures, that provides a basis for planning and instruction.

**Independent living**: An expanded view of independent living is that it comprises all the demands of living on one's own. This includes residential choices and skills, economic decisions and money management, time management, community mobility, involvement in community activities, citizenship responsibilities, and so forth. Some agencies limit their meaning of this term to residential living.

**Individualized education program (IEP)**: The IEP is a written document required for all individuals in school who have been classified as needing special education programs or related services because of some disabling condition. The document should include the student's present level of functioning in each identified needs area, a statement of annual goals for the student, a statement of appropriate short-term objectives with evaluation approach and evaluation criteria for determining progress toward achievement of annual goals, a statement of any required related services and who will provide them, a statement of needed transition services (beginning at least by age 16), and a statement that relates to the issue of least restrictive environment for the student relative to each of the programs and services to be provided.

**Individualized education program planning meeting**: The IEP planning meeting occurs at least once annually. The student's present level of functioning is discussed, progress made since the last meeting (for continuing students) is reviewed, and goals and objectives are established for the next year. Every third year, the IEP planning group will conduct an extensive, in-depth review of the student's status based on the comprehensive re-evaluation data.

**Integrated employment**: Integrated employment is viewed in most cases as competitive employment, where a person with disabilities has real work opportunities in settings where the interactions are primarily with nondisabled people.

**Leisure/recreation needs**: Leisure and recreation are critical factors in the long-term success of persons with disabilities. Planning ahead for the skills needed to access and engage in leisure and recreation opportunities is a responsibility of the IEP team. There should be ongoing assessment of interests and encouragement of participation in a variety of activities. Accessing leisure and recreational activities through school clubs, parks and recreation programs, sport leagues, church groups, school and public libraries, and community facilities (movie theaters, bowling alleys, skating rinks, parks, etc.) should be planning and programming goals.

**Living arrangement options**: Planning for living options after leaving school depends on a variety of factors, beginning with the abilities and preferences of the students. In addition, the living alternatives vary from community to community. Planning should first address the need to provide instruction in the basic skills necessary to take full advantage of the living options that are available. This would include the areas of consumer skills, home management skills (cleaning, cooking, laundry, use of appliances, etc.) safety, dealing with emergencies, and the like. Planning for accessing living options would look at living at home with parents, supervised apartment, group home, adult foster care, independent apartment with assistance services, and independent apartment options.

**Medical needs**: Planning for the current and future medical needs of an individual student must involve the student's family. In cases where parents are not well informed regarding the importance of continuing medical needs support, or of the resources in the community for their son or daughter, the IEP team should consider planning for accessing such resources as ARC-USA health insurance, Medicaid, sliding fee scale services (community mental health centers, public health centers, Easter Seals, March of Dimes, and some drug and alcohol centers), and Kansas Rehabilitation Services.

**On-the-Job Training (OJT)**: Training that occurs on the actual job site while a person is employed and actually working at the job is referred to as on-the-job training. Training for both job skills and job-related behaviors are taught within a specific job setting by an employer, supervisor, or a job coach employed specifically for that purpose. OJT may be entry-level or advanced skill training.

**Personal management needs**: Personal management needs overlap several other planning areas for IEP teams. Personal management of money, personal belongings, health care needs, personal hygiene needs, dental hygiene needs, and management and use of time are examples of needs in this area. Desirable personal habits such as self-control of emotions and behaviors, responsibility, and honesty are also examples of personal management needs to consider in planning for curriculum and instruction.

**Postsecondary education**: Any education program beyond high school that has an academic, professional, or preprofessional focus is considered postsecondary education. Typically, these are 2- or 4-year college or institution programs in areas such as liberal arts and sciences, journalism, engineering, fine arts, humanities, or education.

**Postsecondary education or training options**: Postsecondary education options include adult education, community college, or college or university programs. Any vocational or technical program beyond high school that does not lead to an associate of arts or baccalaureate degree is considered postsecondary training. Postsecondary training may be obtained in public vocational and technical schools, community college vocational or technical programs, private vocational or technical schools, labor union trades/skills training, military vocational or technical skills training, apprenticeship programs, or state/federal employment training programs. Some of these programs require a license or certificate for an individual before being permitted to practice their occupational skills.

**Self-advocacy needs**: IEP planning for self-advocacy needs refers to instruction or related services that will help to develop an individual student's skills in assuming responsibility for himself or herself at school and in the community. Skill instruction for self-advocacy in the IEP meeting is a starting goal that is recommended. Skill instruction should also include awareness of one's own needs and assertiveness training in other settings.

**Socialization opportunities**: Successful transitions begin while students are still in school. IEP teams should look at each individual student's social skills with peers with disabilities, peers without disabilities, family members, adults at school and the community, and children. Socialization opportunities can be made a part of the instructional program for a student at first as social skills instruction but later as a maintenance activity.

**Supported employment**: Supported employment may be ongoing or time-limited in nature and may occur in competitive or noncompetitive work environments. Ideally, the supported employment opportunity is within the community in a competitive employment setting, and the individual with a disability is provided only the degree of support that is necessary for him or her to perform the job tasks and maintain the expected behaviors and performance level of the job independently. The level of support is decreased over time and in amount to facilitate the person's independence. Supported employment models include competitive employment with support, enclaves within competitive employment, mobile work crews in the community, specialized sheltered employment, and general sheltered employment.

**Transition councils**: Transition councils are representative groups of persons at the local level who organize to promote, develop, maintain, and improve secondary special education, transition planning, transition services, and adult services for individuals with disabilities who move from school settings to adult living. The councils are comprised of persons with disabilities, their families, school personnel, adult service agency personnel, and members of the community who can contribute to the mission of the council.

**Transition services**: Transition services refer to a coordinated set of activities for an individual with disabilities, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes the move from school to postschool/adult living.

**Transportation options**: Since transportation is key to mobility in a community, transportation options must be considered and planned for in the IEP. Instructional goals and objectives may be appropriate for skill instruction in accessing available transportation options. Related services goals and objectives may be needed to provide a transportation option that does not exist. Long-term planning should be initiated to try to ensure that appropriate transportation options will be available after the student leaves school. Transportation options include the following examples: driving one's own vehicle, taxi service, public transit service, and transportation services for elderly people and/or people with disabilities.

# APPENDIX C

## Transition From School to Independence for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities: Information and Referral Resources

## Virginia Department of Education Interagency Programs: Transition Information and Referral

VIRGINIA'S INTERCOMMUNITY TRANSITION COUNCIL
c/o Dr. Sharon deFur, Adolescent Services
Virginia Department of Education
PO Box 6Q/23rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23216-2060
804-225-3242

Comprised of state and local representatives from 13 state agencies and the community, the task force meets quarterly to develop strategies and recommendations for implementing transition statewide. Meetings are open and public comment is invited. Task force members may be available for presentations locally.

| | |
|---|---|
| DOE PROJECT MANAGER: | **Sharon deFur** |
| DOE PROJECT TEAM: | **Neils Brooks,** Lead Specialist, Vocational Education |
| | **Rebecca Dedmond**, Pre-Adolescent Services, Career Education |
| | **Rebecca Moak**, Compliance Coordination, Adult Literacy |

TASK FORCE PARTICIPATION BY:

Virginia Community College System
Virginia Department of Correctional Education
State Council of Higher Education
Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
Governor's Employment and Training Department
Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation & Substance Abuse Services
Virginia Department of Rights for Virginians With Disabilities
Virginia Department of Social Services
Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped
Virginia Employment Commission
Virginia Department of Youth and Family Services
Consumers
Parents of youth with disabilities
Employers

No direct services are specifically offered. Information is disseminated statewide by task force members. Local interagency transition planning councils are invited to use meetings as a forum for professional development, transition networking, and short-term technical assistance.

## SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA TRANSITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
121 Lane Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
703-231-8229
1-800-848-2714

Offering technical assistance and training for local education agencies and adult service agencies in developing transition teams, transition programs and services, and individualized transition planning. Resource and curriculum materials are available on loan.

PROJECT DIRECTOR: **Dr. Susan Asselin**

DOE PROGRAM MANAGERS:
Dr. Sharon deFur 804-225-3242
Chet Walrod 804-225-2842

TRANSITION COORDINATOR: **Robert J. Richards**
POSTSECONDARY COORDINATOR: **Jeananne Dixon** 703-674-3600/358

Services available at no cost in the following LEAs:

Alleghany
Montgomery
Bristol
Pittsylvania
Covington City
Roanoke City
Russell
Franklin
Smyth
Grayson
Wise
Amherst
Campbell
Lynchburg City
Highlands
Boutetourt
Patrick
Carroll
Radford City
Roanoke County
Floyd
Scott
Giles
Washington
Lee
Bath
Rockbridge
Bland
Martinsville City
Norton
Buchanan
Pulaski
Craig
Dickenson
Salem City
Galax
Tazewell
Henry
Wythe
Bedford
Lexington City

### TRADE-RELATED ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES (TRAC)

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
Fishersville, VA 22939
703-332-7305
1-800-345-WWRC X27110

Offering training and technical assistance in the utilization of criterion referenced assessment and curriculum materials in preparing youth with disabilities with trade-related academic competencies.

PROJECT DIRECTOR: **Sherry DeMoss**

CURRICULUM SPECIALIST: **Sonia Costa**

DOE PROGRAM MANAGER: Sharon deFur
804-225-3242

Services and newsletter available statewide. TRAC competency manual and competency tests available on a cost-recovery basis. Consultant's fee may be charged for training.

### PENINSULA AREA COOPERATIVE EVALUATION SERVICES (PACES)

13400 Woodside Lane
Newport News, VA 23602
804-874-0289

Under contract with the Department of Education, PACES offers inservice training for Virginia school personnel in school-based vocational evaluation.

PROJECT DIRECTOR: **Nancy Scott**

DOE PROGRAM MANAGER: Chet Walrod
804-225-2842

Services available to all LEAs in Virgnia. Contact Nancy Scott for referral information.

## POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAM (PERT)

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
Fishersville, VA 22939
703-332-7123

A cooperative transition program among the Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Education and Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center offering on-site comprehensive vocational evaluation for youth with disabilities with follow-up and individual transition planning technical assistance by transition resource specialists. Initial participation in this program is at no cost to the LEA.

DIRECTOR: **Kathy Robinson**

DOE PROGRAM MANAGER: Sharon deFur
804-225-3242

TRANSITION RESOURCE SPECIALISTS (TRS):

FIELD TRS

**Toni Borst** currently serving:
Amelia
Bath
Chesterfield
Colonial Heights
Fluvanna
Frederick
Goochland
Hanover
Henrico
Highland
Louisa
Page
Powhatan
Richmond City
Rockbridge
Warren

**Amy Griffith** currently serving:
Accomack
Chesapeake City
Dinwiddie
Essex
Gloucester
Hopewell
King George
King & Queen
Mathews
New Kent
Newport News
Norfolk
Northampton
Petersburg
Portsmouth
Prince George
Suffolk

**Terry Vaughn** currently serving:
Bland
Buckingham
Campbell
Carroll
Charlottesville
Franklin
Giles
Halifax
Lunenburg
Lynchburg
Montgomery
Prince Edward
Pulaski
Roanoke City
Roanoke County
Smyth
Wythe

**Caroline Bertrand** currently serving:
Alexandria
Arlington
Fairfax
Fauquier
Manassas City
Manassas Park City
Prince William

**ON-SITE TRS**
Veronica Davis
Ellen Murnane

# APPENDIX D

## Examples of Transition Services Goals, Objectives, and Action Statements

## Examples of Transition Services Goals, Objectives, and Action Statements

### TED: A CASE STUDY

Ted is 16 and in the 10th grade at Creekwood High School. He tests in the low average intellectual range with perceptual and neurological disabilities. School records indicate satisfactory social skills, but few significant interpersonal relationships.

Ted has simple counting and basic word-recognition skills, but he has difficulty telling time and discriminating among coins. His teacher reports a history of noncompliance, absenteeism, and sarcasm to persons in authority. She suggests remedial academic and prevocational/instruction preparation.

Ted's mother indicates that he shows little initiative at home because he is unwilling to help out. Ted does not have a driver's license because his mother is concerned about his lack of concentration and is afraid he could be dangerous behind the wheel. She often gets upset with Ted's irresponsibility and lack of respect and cooperation at home. She does not anticipate his living at home after graduation.

Three days a week, Ted works at a local restaurant. Ted's major responsibilities include mopping, emptying trash, serving food, and running errands. His employer describes him as a slow, steady worker who likes praise but ignores prompts to work more quickly. He has managed to maintain employment in spite of the fact that on several occasions he has walked off the job when criticized or reprimanded for aggressive behavior.

School staff had received technical assistance and inservice training based on a team approach to developing transition plans in collaboration with community service agencies. On the basis of the results of the comprehensive vocational evaluation, the IEP/ITP team was able to make recommendations for Ted's vocational education program. Results of the evaluation identified potential and interest in Greenhouse Laborer, Landscape Laborer, Industrial Cleaner, and Kitchen Helper with remediation of significant work behavior deficits. Ted identified his vocational goal as Landscape Laborer. Independent living and leisure skill deficits were identified. A driver's evaluation indicated major barriers to driving potential.

Based on this vocational goal, the IEP/ITP team planned the following: the vocational education teacher planned support in trade-related academic areas (measuring, reading work orders, tool identification) and work behaviors (attendance, following directions, and response to criticism/supervision); the special education teacher planned classroom accommodations (reading tests, peer tutoring, and curriculum modification); the academic teacher planned support in developing independent living skills (transportation, banking, budgeting, job application); and the

DRS representative planned a summer youth work experience with a local landscaping company focused on further development to overcome work behavior deficits.

Ted will be monitored by the IEP/ITP team throughout high school. Ted and his family will be given information regarding postsecondary options. In all likelihood, Ted well be referred to the DRS member of the team for further job training or job placement with supported employment services following graduation. Also, Ted will be linked with The Community Services Board member of the team for support services in the areas of housing, use of leisure time, and independent living, if those services are needed.

# INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN
# IEP ADDENDUM

| Ted | Creekwood H.S. | 5/92 |
|---|---|---|
| **STUDENT NAME** | **SCHOOL** | **DATE** |

Based on this student's interests, aptitudes, and needs, the following desired postsecondary transition outcomes are identified:

| I. EDUCATION | II. EMPLOYMENT | III. INDEPENDENT LIVING |
|---|---|---|
| DESIRED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OUTCOME(S) | DESIRED POSTSECONDARY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME(S) | DESIRED POSTSECONDARY OUTCOME(S) |
| Adult education_________ | Full-time competitive employment___________ | Living with family________<br>Living alone, with friends or partner XX |
| Vocational training_____ | Part-time competitive employment XX | Transportation independently XX<br>with support_________ |
| Community college_______ | Full-time supported employment__________ | Financial assistance required___________________ |
| College/university______ | Part-time supported employment__________ | Community participation XX |
| Other___________________ | Other________________ | Other Participation in leisure activities |
| Other___________________ | Other________________ | Other____________________ |
| Transition services or planning needed in this area? Yes___ No XX | Transition services or planning needed in this area? Yes XX No___ | Transition services or planning needed in this area? Yes XX No___ |

Narrative Statement of Desired Long Range Outcomes:______________________________________________

## STATEMENTS OF NEEDED TRANSITION SERVICES

**ANNUAL GOAL:** Ted will be referred to the appropriate community agency to be considered for a possible summer work experience.

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ted and his parents, if necessary, meet with the agency representative. | Employment options will be considered. | | TBA | Aug. '93 |

**ANNUAL GOAL:** ______

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

## STATEMENTS OF NEEDED TRANSITION SERVICES

**ANNUAL GOAL:** Ted will develop skills in landscaping with a minimum of 75% accuracy.

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify landscaping tools. | 1. Modify: use name tags. | 1st. mo. | 1. Voc. & Sp. Ed. teachers | June '93 |
| 2. Identify appropriate tool use. | 2. Modify: Match tools with job related tasks in pictures & usage. | 2nd mo. | 2. Same as above | |
| 3. Identify plants. | 3. Modify: use name tags. | 3rd mo | 3. Same | |
| 4. Identify shrubs. | 4. Modify: use name tags. | 3rd mo | 4. Same | |
| 5. Place plants and shrubs according to work orders. | 5. Modify: verbal instr. & sketched layouts. | 4 - 9 mo. | 5. Same | |
| | 6. Modify: all testing will be verbal with no time restraints. | | 6. Sp.Ed. teachers | |

**ANNUAL GOAL:** Ted will develop employability skills in landscaping class with 80% - 90% accuracy through observation.

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To be on time. | 1. Prepare a daily schedule. | | 1. Ted & Sp. Ed. teacher | June '93 |
| 2. Follow directions/instructions. | 2. Repeat directions/ instructions. | | 2. Voc. Teacher | |
| 3. Appropriately respond to teachers, aides, and supervisors. | 3. Positive feedback will precede constructive criticism with explanation. | | 3. Voc. Teacher, Sp.Ed. teacher, peer tutor | |

## STATEMENTS OF NEEDED TRANSITION SERVICES

**ANNUAL GOAL:** Ted will develop skills for independent living.

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify and use alternate ways to get to work. | 1. Make a contract with co-worker or peer. | | 1. Ted and Sp. Ed. teacher | June '93 |
| 2. Open a savings account. | 2. Community bank. | | 2. Ted, mother, Sp.Ed. teacher | |
| 3. Make a budget. | 3. Local newspaper ads. | | 3. Sp.Ed. teacher | |
| 4. Complete a job application. | 4. Variety of local business applications. | | 4. Sp.Ed. teacher | |

**ANNUAL GOAL:** Ted will select and participate in an extracurricular activity to improve social skills.

| OBJECTIVES | OPTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | TIME LINE | PERSONS/ AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE | OUTCOME/ COMPLETION DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify area of interest. | 1. School and community activity schedules. | | 1. Ted & Sp.Ed. teacher | June '93 |
| 2. Attend regularly. | 2. Discusses activity of meeting with Sp. Ed. teacher. | | 2. Ted & Sp.Ed. teacher | |
| 3. Prepare brief presentation. | 3. Reports experiences to other students | | 3. Ted & Sp.Ed. teacher, Activity leader | |

*I agree with this Individual Transition Plan (ITP) for ______________________________. I understand the contents of this document and I have been informed of my due process rights and have received a copy of them. I understand that I have the right to review my child's records and to request a change in the IEP at any time. I also understand that this transition plan may change from year to year and my involvement in this plan will be necessary. I have received a copy of my child's IEP for the current school year and a copy of the ITP. I also give permission for the ______________ Public Schools to release and exchange information with agencies listed below so that we may successfully implement the transition program as described in this plan.*

_____/_____/_____
MONTH DAY YEAR

______________________________
SIGNATURE OF PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)/ OR SURROGATE

_____/_____/_____
MONTH DAY YEAR

______________________________
SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

## FAMILY/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

| SIGNATURE | TITLE/AGENCY | PHONE NO. | DATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
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### Chapter 11

# Program Evaluation

*John A. McLaughlin and Virginia Laycock McLaughlin*

## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is a process through which information is collected to enable people to make comparisons between the performance characteristics of a program and standards for desired performance. Four key points are critical to this conception of evaluation. First, evaluation is based on information. Second, evaluation requires a comparison of what actually happens in a program to some defined standard. Third, evaluation findings must be shared with others through informal or formal reporting. Finally, people make the judgments about the program based on the information provided.

There are several reasons for conducting evaluations of educational programs. In the case of special education, both federal (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and state regulations (Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia, 1990) require annual program evaluations. Increasing emphasis on accountability and commitment to improve educational programs further drive evaluation efforts. Perhaps an even more compelling reason to evaluate special education programs is advocacy (Gallagher, 1979). All special educators strive to be advocates for effective educational experiences for students with disabilities. There are many different avenues for advocacy including legal, administrative, and social channels. However, it is through effective evaluation that educators are able to identify specific strengths and weaknesses of special education programs -- the information needed by advocates who employ those various channels. Thus, a driving force behind evaluation of special education programs is the critical need for information about program effectiveness that can enable administrators and others to be more effective advocates.

This chapter provides administrators and supervisors of programs for students with disabilities an overview of program evaluation concepts and practices. Specifically, the chapter is organized around the following questions of concern to administrators:

1. **What are the components of an evaluation program?**

2. **What are the underlying assumptions that guide program evaluation?**

3. **What are the critical steps for planning an evaluation?**

4. **What are some important considerations for conducting an evaluation?**

5. **How does the team evaluate its own evaluation?**

## 1. WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF AN EVALUATION PROGRAM?

Evaluation has all the essential features of a program. It can be defined in terms of outcomes (objectives achieved), processes (activities conducted to achieve the objectives), and inputs (resources used to support the activities, such as people, money, equipment, information, and facilities).

The outcome of evaluation is an information base from which people make judgments that may lead to decisions impacting a program. A range of outcomes is possible. Sometimes the judgments confirm or change people's impressions of the program, primarily affecting their levels of confidence or perceptions of program effectiveness without leading to explicit decisions or action plans. In other instances, people form judgments about program weaknesses that lead them to enact changes to improve the program. When a program is found to meet expectations, people usually decide to continue it or go on to something new because the objectives have been achieved. When evaluations are consistently positive, people may decide to share their successes with others. Thus, the evaluation program provides information that people can use to make judgments leading to many different uses.

The processes implemented to achieve the evaluation outcomes fall into five categories. First, the focus of the evaluation must be identified. What aspects of the program will be evaluated, for what purposes, and by whom? Second, specific evaluation questions and criteria for the answers to these questions must be generated. Third, information collection strategies must be identified and implemented to address the evaluation questions. Multiple strategies are recommended including interviews, observations, surveys, and pencil-and-paper tests. Fourth, the evaluators must analyze the evaluation data to reduce them to an information base from which judgments can be made. Finally, the evaluation information must be reported to enable relevant audiences to take appropriate actions.

A review of these processes suggests the need for a number of different resources to support the evaluation effort. First, evaluation requires people, those responsible for the evaluation -- those who will be participants in the evaluation, and those who are the intended users of the evaluation information. Second, evaluation requires some information collection procedures and instruments. If these are not available, they have to be developed as part of the evaluation process. Fiscal resources, as well as time, equipment, and program documentation, are also inputs to the evaluation program.

## 2. WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS THAT GUIDE PROGRAM EVALUATION?

There are several basic assumptions that guide the design, conduct, report, and use of evaluations of special education programs. The most salient assumptions are set forth here.

### Use

No one would undertake an evaluation of a program without a specific purpose or use in mind. Why do people want an evaluation of a special education program? How will the information generated from the evaluation be used by various audiences? What decisions will be served by the evaluation? These questions and others related to the use of evaluation findings must be made explicit at the start of the evaluation. The answers will drive all phases of the evaluation, from design to implementation to reporting.

### Involvement

A number of factors contribute to successful evaluations of special education programs, but none is more important than the people involved. Simply put, evaluation is a team effort. The team should include people who represent both program and evaluation expertise. On the program side, there should be people who are knowledgeable about the special education program policies and procedures, the administrative issues surrounding the program, and various program content issues such as curriculum and instruction. Evaluators should have the skills necessary to describe the program so that it can be evaluated, frame evaluation questions, design and administer a variety of information collection techniques, conduct needed data reduction strategies, and communicate evaluation findings in a usable manner.

Another group of people often associated with the evaluation of programs is called *stakeholders*. According to Patton (1986), these are the individuals who have a vested interest in the findings of the evaluation. Because of this interest, they must be involved in the evaluation design. Indeed, the utility of the evaluation will be enhanced if they are involved in all phases from design to implementation to interpretation of findings to the identification of strategies for acting upon those findings.

Stakeholders who have an interest in the evaluation of special education programs may include funding agency representatives, central office administrators, school board members, parents, teachers, principals, and ancillary support staff. It is essential to identify stakeholders at the start of the evaluation to determine their specific interests in the evaluation and the most effective ways to involve them so that these interests are best served. According to Berkowitz (1992), the evaluation team must consider a number of factors when deciding to use stakeholders in evaluations of special education programs. The team members should first determine whether or not they agree with the rationale for using stakeholders. Then, they must agree that they can spend the time and energy it takes to include in the process people who hold diverse expectations for the evaluation.

With so many potential stakeholders, it is legitimate to ask how they can all be involved. Some may become evaluation team members, particularly if they represent the evaluation's primary audience. Others may be used as members of an advisory group. For example, if information is to be gathered from teachers or parents, then representatives of these groups should participate in the design and field testing of information-collection procedures. Greene (1988) has suggested that stakeholders can best be used to provide advice to the evaluator, who then must make decisions based on the technical needs of the evaluation study.

## Relationship to the Program Plan

Perhaps the most frequent complaint about program evaluation is that audiences do not know how to use evaluation results. Specifically, they are unable to figure out how to apply the results to making decisions about the program. This problem can be overcome by linking the evaluation to specific aspects of the program plan before the evaluation is begun. This requires the development of a program design that communicates the theory underlying the program (i.e., how it works). The task of the evaluation team is to present the program in terms of its objectives (what it hopes to achieve), its activities (how it will achieve the objectives), and its inputs (the resources necessary to conduct the program). After the design is completed, the team can use it to focus its evaluation questions, and to identify the appropriate criteria for the answers to those questions. The process of linking the evaluation to the program plan allows the team to interpret the evaluation findings and make recommendations for use that are directly related to the program plan. This enhances the utility of the evaluation.

## Flexibility

Evaluation depends on a systematic planning process. Evaluation needs are determined by the team, objectives for the evaluation are established, strategies for achieving these objectives are formulated, and resources are secured. As with any other plan, however, events occur during the development and implementation of the evaluation plan that necessitate its revision. New questions may arise, or lack of appropriate instrumentation may necessitate different approaches to information collection. The team must be sensitive to events in the program that could influence the design, conduct, or reporting of the evaluation throughout the evaluation process.

## 3. WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL STEPS FOR PLANNING AN EVALUATION?

Given the basic assumptions just described, how should the team proceed? While most would agree that evaluation can be complex, it can be made easier by approaching the task systematically. The steps to planning an evaluation are set forth in Figure 1 and described briefly in the following paragraphs. These steps are common to all evaluation efforts and are patterned after the work of Brinkerhoff and others (Brinkerhoff, Brethower, Hluchyj, & Nowakowski, 1983). Worksheets adapted from evaluation training modules (McLaughlin, 1990) are provided in Appendix A as additional aids to planning. The worksheets were completed for a sample program evaluation to collect information to help staff and others decide which aspects of the teacher assistance team were successful and which might need improvement. These worksheets will be referred to throughout the next sections.

### Step 1: Getting Started

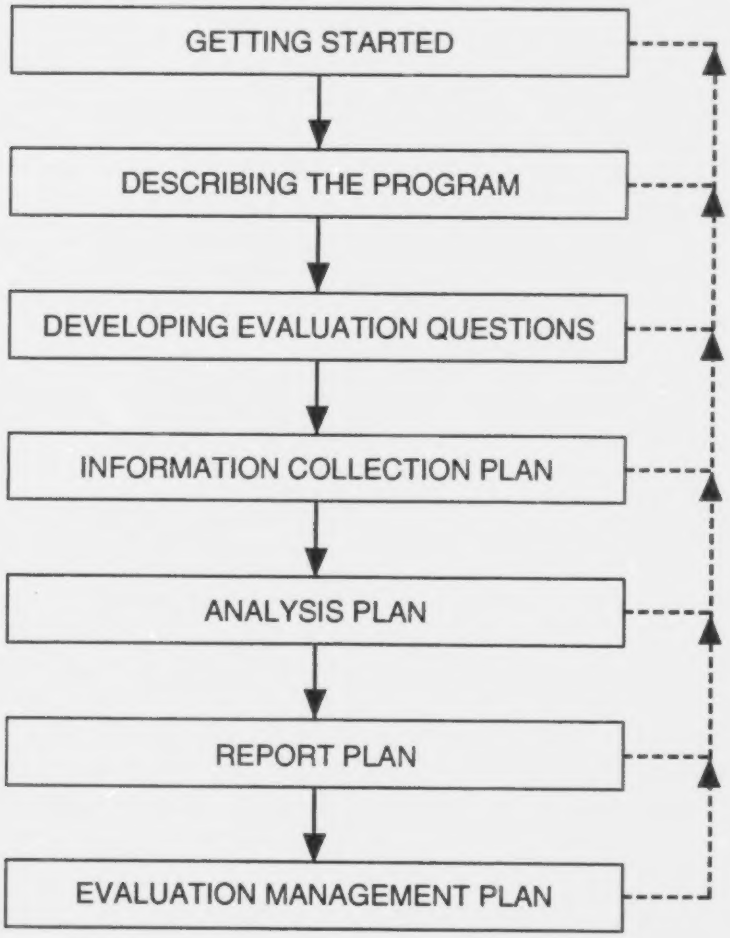
The initial step involves forming the evaluation team and establishing the purposes of the evaluation. The team should include one or more persons who are knowledgeable about the program, its theory base, underlying assumptions, and contextual influences and one or more persons who have evaluation expertise. Worksheet I is a team member skill checklist designed to guide identification of participants who are able to contribute the knowledge and skills required for an effective program evaluation. When needs for specific expertise exceed what is available within the program or school division, then it may be necessary to seek assistance from external consultants. In Appendix A, Worksheet I indicates that the evaluation team in the example was composed of individuals who had several of the skills necessary for the design and conduct of the evaluation.

The team should be supported by a broader group of stakeholders who can assist in all phases of the evaluation. Worksheet II is a stakeholder involvement plan to help the evaluation team recognize the specific individuals or groups that ought to be included and the range of their participation in the evaluation. Some may be involved in only one or two tasks, while others are major players throughout the evaluation. In the example, the stakeholder group includes a number of individuals who will have multiple responsibilities throughout the evaluation. Levels of involvement will vary, with some of the stakeholders taking an active role while others may simply be asked to reflect on team products and thoughts. It is often necessary to orient the stakeholders and evaluation team to effective group processes to increase their skill in collaborating on the evaluation of the special education program.

In consultation with the stakeholder group, the team forms the purpose statement for the evaluation. Although it may be tempting to evaluate the entire special education program at once, an evaluation focused on specific components of the program generally is more manageable and has greater impact. A more focused evaluation requires agreement on the specific component(s) of the program to be

Figure 1

## Steps in Planning the Evaluation


GETTING STARTED
DESCRIBING THE PROGRAM
DEVELOPING EVALUATION QUESTIONS
INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN
ANALYSIS PLAN
REPORT PLAN
EVALUATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

evaluated. Worksheet III is a matrix to help teams focus on particular components of the special education program in terms of their relative need for evaluation. Note that in the example the evaluation team reviewed each of the major components of the local special education program and decided that, while all were important, two were essential. The team members chose to evaluate the teacher assistance teams because this program represented a new initiative.

Once the program component has been targeted, the team must articulate a clear statement of purpose for the evaluation. This purpose statement must include identification of the components of the program that will be evaluated and the specific objectives of the evaluation, along with explicit indications of who will use the results of the evaluation, for what purposes, and according to what time frame. Acknowledging the flexibility principle presented earlier, the team must realize that this is a draft statement of purpose that might well be revised as the evaluation progresses.

### Step 2: Program Description

As noted earlier, it is important to ground the evaluation in the specific program components to be evaluated. Elaboration of those program components (a program description) is then necessary to communicate the program theory (the way the program is supposed to work). In this second step, therefore, the team must establish a public representation of the staff's objectives (program outcomes), how they hope to achieve them (program processes), and the resources required to implement the prescribed activities (program inputs). A format for developing such a program description, adapted from the work of Yavorsky (1975), is provided in Worksheet IV. The target of the example evaluation, teacher assistance teams, is described in terms of its inputs, processes, and outcomes. Characterizing the program in this way contributes to a clearer and more public understanding of program elements and the interdependencies among resources, activities, and outcomes. At any point in the evaluation process, the team should be able to link an evaluation question and strategy to a specific program component. This enhances the potential utility of the evaluation. If the information in the program description is not sufficient to inform the evaluation team, then it may be necessary to add additional detail to enable the team to continue the evaluation.

As noted earlier, evaluation is a comparative process, one that requires the evaluation team to compare program performance to the standard for the program. A *standard* is an expectation of what should be; *performance* refers to what actually occurs. Evaluation dictates that the team gathers information about the program's outcomes, activities, and/or inputs to be compared to expected or desired levels of these variables. One of the greatest challenges faced by teams is making explicit the standards for the program.

There are several sources for standards for special education programs beyond the professional experiences and beliefs of the program staff. The literature and various best practice guides are excellent starting places. In the mid-1980's, a National Regional Resource Center panel developed indicators of effectiveness in special education. Its *Reference Tool* (1986) would be a valuable resource to the team. Additionally, a cooperative agreement has been developed between the U.S. Department of Education and the University of Minnesota to establish the National Center on Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities. Through a series of Working Papers (Ysseldyke et al., 1991, 1992), Center staff are presenting a conceptual model of educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Consulting these papers may help the evaluation team identify potential standards for the program to be evaluated. One matter to consider, however, is the degree to which the recommended standards match the intentions of the local program; that is, standards must always flow logically from program intent.

### Step 3: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions inform the team of the focus of the evaluation and the information required. Evaluation questions are also informing in another sense: They should communicate the acceptable answers (i.e., the standards represented in the program description).

Clarity in the formulation of evaluation questions is critical at this third step in the evaluation planning sequence. One typical problem encountered by evaluation teams is ensuring that a particular question will lead to empirical information. For example, asking whether students improved as a result of the program intervention is value laden. What is meant by improvement? What would the students be doing if they improved? What would they report? What would others report? It is the team's responsibility in collaboration with the stakeholders to define the desired change variables associated with the program targets, as well as the value of any observed change.

Several different types of questions may be addressed through the evaluation. These can be separated into three categories: design, implementation, and outcome.

*Design*. The initial category of evaluation questions addresses the planning function of programs. The focus is on the conceptualization articulated in a program description. Although design evaluation may be particularly helpful as new programs are being conceptualized, it is also applicable for established programs. Questions might address the degree to which best practices are used in construction of a program; the extent to which planners have logically and practically sequenced program activities to achieve objectives; and the presence of appropriate legal, regulatory, and ethical practices in the program conceptualization.

*Process*. The evaluation team might want to address two questions in this category that deal with the implementation process. First, they might ask whether all resources are available as specified in the program description. For example, in an evaluation of the individualized education program (IEP) process, the team could check to see whether all required persons are present to participate in planning and also assess the degree to which there is a common understanding of the roles of IEP participants and levels of mutual trust.

Another process question that could be addressed centers on the degree to which activities necessary to achieve objectives are implemented according to program planner expectations. Again using the IEP example, the team might decide to document the conduct of the IEP meetings according to predetermined steps or activities. An important process question might seek to determine whether the actual levels of involvement for all participants match the standard established in the program description.

Process or implementation questions are important for two reasons. First, answering these questions will allow program staff to determine whether all resources are present and allocated according to expectation. If they are not, then success in achieving projected outcomes is questionable. Second, documentation of what is actually happening in the program helps the programmers justify their conclusions about *why* outcomes were or were not accomplished. Without the process data, the audience has to accept on faith that programmers did what they said they were doing in the program description.

*Outcome*. No program evaluation is complete without some assessment of the degree to which objectives (anticipated outcomes) are achieved. Did program participants acquire needed information. Do participants have a positive perception of the program? What was the total cost of the program? These are examples of typical outcome evaluation questions.

Worksheet V is intended to help teams frame evaluation questions of importance to major stakeholders. Along with the questions, teams should define the specific standards and information needs that constitute answers for each question. Appendix A, Worksheet V, contains the two *outcome* evaluation questions addressed by the team evaluating the teacher assistance teams.

## Step 4: Information Collection Plan

After the questions and information requirements have been formulated, the team must develop the procedures that will be employed to gather information to answer those questions. The team must address three issues for each information collection procedure: the sources of information, methods of information collection, and timing of information collection. Worksheet VI provides a framework for recording these planning decisions. Note in the example that information collection strategies have been identified for each evaluation question.

*Sources*. There are multiple sources for information, and the evaluation team must decide which source(s) will most appropriately provide the information required to answer the evaluation questions. This decision is guided in part by the persons requesting the information. The team should try to access the sources that have the greatest credibility for the particular audience in order to enhance the audience's confidence in evaluation findings. For example, the audience for the IEP evaluation might require that the team gather information from parents and teachers regarding effectiveness of the IEP. Availability of respondents to the evaluation might also influence the team's selection of sources. For example, the team may want to include parents but find it difficult to schedule interviews that don't conflict with the parents' work schedules. Finally, the selection of an information source can be determined by the projected quality of the source. In the IEP example, one source of information about student achievement gains might be IEP records; however, after reviewing a sample of these records, the team might decide that the records are incomplete and in some cases inaccurate.

Another consideration to take into account when identifying a source of information centers on the variety of sources. Whenever possible, the team should collect information from multiple sources. For example, if the team needs to know about parent participation in the IEP process, it might decide to gather information from parents, teachers, and administrators about their perceptions of parent involvement.

*Methods*. After the team has determined the sources for evaluation information, it must decide the most appropriate methods for collecting the information from these sources. Availability of existing instruments or collection procedures is of critical importance here. Review of relevant literature will help the team identify strategies and instruments used successfully for similar program evaluations. The team should use commercially produced instruments that have been determined to be reliable, valid, and objective for the source(s) from which information will be collected. If this is not possible, then the team will find itself in the position of having to develop and field test the required instruments. This takes considerable time and expertise, and in some cases, the data derived from project-developed instruments are not viewed as positively by audiences as those that are commercially produced.

It is recommended that the team use multiple collection strategies for each question. For example, if parents were selected as a viable source of information to determine the level of IEP involvement, then the team might decide to interview parents about their involvement, observe their actual involvement, and review documents that describe their involvement. While the cost of the evaluation increases when multiple strategies and multiple sources are employed, the result is increased confidence in the findings and conclusions of the evaluation.

*Timing*. When should the team collect information? How often? In most evaluations this is determined by two factors. First, the audience for the evaluation usually has specific dates or deadlines when information about the evaluation questions is needed. If the evaluation is to be useful, it must be timely. The second factor is the nature of the program intervention. The team must obtain from the program staff a reasonable estimate of when the intervention is to take effect in order to assess program outcomes adequately. Moreover, there may be interest in identifying the long-term effects of the intervention or the degree to which the effects generalize to other settings. For example, if the team were evaluating a social skills instructional program for students with learning disabilities, it might decide to collect information in the resource room during the program, at its conclusion and 6 months later. Both regular and resource class environments may be observation sites.

In summary, the team is faced with three decisions when planning the collection of information: what sources of information to use, what methods of collection to employ, and what times to collect the information. Using stakeholders for input to these decisions will increase the potential utility of the collection processes. Field testing information collection strategies is also highly recommended.

### Step 5: Data Analysis Plan

This step in planning the evaluation involves the selection of appropriate data storage and analysis techniques. In most cases, the team will be collecting information from a number of sources using a variety of methods. Organization and storage are, therefore, important considerations. If these functions are well planned, analysis and reporting of evaluation information will be greatly enhanced.

The actual analysis of data depends on the type of data collected and the question to be answered. It is important to field test data analysis techniques prior to the actual collection of performance data, to be certain that the selected techniques can be used to answer the evaluation question. For complex data sets, it is advisable to work with a consultant who has specialized expertise. Review of associated literature also provides input to the selection decision regarding data analysis procedures.

Worksheet VII is a matrix to assist the team in identifying data analysis procedures and schedules linked to each data collection strategy. The example in Appendix A describes data analysis strategies for the information generated from each collection strategy found in Worksheet VI.

### Step 6: Report Plan

Evaluations are not complete without reports. Both informal and formal reports are the vehicles for communicating the evaluation processes and findings. Reports should be both timely and comprehensible. The team must determine the times at which evaluation information is needed by its audiences and the most useful formats for the reports. Some audiences will desire verbal reports, others written reports, and others both modes of delivery.

Stakeholder involvement continues to be critical; stakeholders can advise the team on appropriate report formats, as well as language. Different methods can be field tested with the stakeholders. At times, it is appropriate to have the stakeholders become part of the reporting process. For example, the team evaluating the IEP might decide to use parents to report to the school board the findings of the evaluation regarding parent involvement. This increases the utility of the evaluation.

It is recommended that the evaluation team deliver reports to audiences throughout the evaluation process, during both planning and implementation. There is no need to wait until the end of the evaluation. Indeed, continuous reporting can provide valuable feedback to the team regarding the utility of the evaluation effort. It gives the team opportunities to make revisions in the evaluation plan to enhance the probability that the evaluation will be used.

Worksheet VIII helps the team develop a report generation plan, including specification of report formats, intended audiences, person(s) responsible, and report deadlines. Different reports may be used to address different evaluation questions or audiences. In the example in Appendix A, the team has determined that it will provide two formal reports -- an interim and a final report. They plan to supplement their final report with videotape segments of both the teacher assistance team meetings and the focus group interviews.

### Step 7: Management Plan

The evaluation enterprise is complex. To maintain some sense of sanity and coordinate the efforts of the many people involved, the evaluation team needs to develop a detailed management plan. Generally, there are two components to the management plan: a schedule of evaluation events and a budget. The plan will help organize the activities that the team plans to carry out to meet the objectives of the evaluation. When the plan is completed, the team and others interested in the evaluation will be able to use it to assess the logical flow of evaluation activities as well as monitor the implementation of the evaluation.

The schedule of events documented in the management plan are tied to the evaluation questions. To address each question, there are proposed subtasks or events related to the collection, analysis, and reporting of the evaluation (Worksheets VI, VII, and VIII). For each subtask, the team should specify persons responsible as well as expected start and completion dates. Worksheet IX is designed for this purpose. The example found in Appendix A was constructed by reviewing Worksheets VI through VIII.

Evaluations cost money! Therefore, the team must establish a budget that reflects all of the projected expenses. The source of information for budget preparation is the schedule of events described in Worksheet IX. For each task there will be associated costs, which typically fall into the following categories: (a) salaries and benefits; (b) travel, lodging, and meals; (c) materials and supplies; and (d) other expenses, including telephone and postage, copying/printing, computer usage, and honoraria for consultants and respondents.

## 4. WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION?

After completing the steps just presented, the team will have completed the evaluation plan, which serves as a public statement of the team's evaluation intentions. The plan includes a statement of the evaluation purpose, how the team expects to achieve that purpose, and the resources required. Now it is time to enter into the implementation phase.

The first step toward implementation is to conduct an evaluation of the plan itself. The team should review the plan to determine the degree to which it is complete, logically sequenced, and representative of best evaluation practices. It may be helpful to have the plan reviewed by experts external to the team to increase the credibility of the plan and to be certain that nothing has been overlooked. Asking stakeholders to review the plan to determine the extent to which it is likely to meet their information needs is also an essential step at this time. Finally, the team might want to conduct a force-field analysis to identify the driving and restraining influences that may have an impact on the achievement of the objectives of the evaluation as planned. After any of these reviews, it may be necessary to revise the plan to increase its potential utility.

After the team has reviewed the plan thoroughly, it is important to secure endorsement from key stakeholders. That is, those groups and/or individuals who approved and supported the evaluation ideas at the start of the planning process should be given the opportunity to give their final approval to the evaluation prior to actual implementation. Although many of these people may have been involved in the review steps, it remains critical at this stage to obtain their explicit and public support before proceeding with the evaluation.

After thorough planning and review, the team is ready to conduct the actual program evaluation. Data collection strategies should be implemented according to the plan, including careful attention to field testing all procedures prior to their actual use. Furthermore, the team should use the data collected during the field test to try out the proposed data analysis and reporting plans. It is recommended that mock tables be developed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of particular presentation modes. Stakeholder feedback at this stage is important.

As the data are collected and analyzed, the team should remember that interpretation of the information is separate from analysis. That is, it is the responsibility of the team members (with stakeholder input) to give meaning to the data derived from the statistical analyses.

Finally, as noted earlier with regard to reporting, it is critical to provide continuous formal and informal feedback about the evaluation process and product to the appropriate audiences. Doing so will minimize the risk of surprises. Ongoing reporting also strengthens the support base for the evaluation, which promotes not only confidence in but also use of the evaluation findings. However, the team will have to be sensitive to the formative nature of early reports, educating users to reasonable expectations for the program being evaluated at each stage in its operation. Thus, it is important to establish benchmarks for each evaluation question.

## 5. HOW DOES THE TEAM EVALUATE ITS OWN EVALUATION?

The final step in the evaluation process is to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the evaluation. The purpose of this plan is to determine the degree to which the evaluation was conducted according to expectation (i.e., according to the evaluation plan) and the degree to which the evaluation achieved the purposes set forth in its purpose statement. The evaluation of the evaluation should also attempt to capture any unexpected outcomes. This final step completes the planning cycle, in that the evaluation of the evaluation follows the same assumptions and steps as the evaluation of an educational program.

Just as standards played an important role in framing the evaluation of the program, they are important for the evaluation of the evaluation. According to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1981), there are four basic standards for judging the worth of an evaluation: *utility* -- the degree to which the plan meets the needs of intended audiences; *feasibility* -- the degree to which the plan can be carried out under the resource constraints of the evaluation project; *propriety* -- the ethical and legal nature of the proposed evaluation practices; and *accuracy* -- the technical adequacy of the evaluation methods.

The evaluation of the evaluation will have many outcomes. It will inform the team members of the level of confidence they can place on the results. It will provide information about facets of the evaluation that should be improved, those that should be continued, and those that should be shared with others interested in evaluating similar programs. None of these benefits will be realized without the implementation of formal information collection procedures designed to evaluate the evaluation.

## SUMMARY

Special education programs are evaluated for a number of reasons. Beyond compliance with federal and state mandates, administrators can use program evaluation as a tool for advocacy, informing program staff and others of what works and what needs to be improved to serve students with disabilities more effectively.

Evaluation has been described as a process that yields information to support decision making about the program being evaluated. Successful evaluations are based on a systematic planning process that is grounded in the program being evaluated. All evaluations include four essential activities: framing the questions, collecting information, analyzing data, and reporting evaluation findings. While there are numerous resources for the evaluation process, the most important is the people associated with the evaluation: the evaluation team, composed of both evaluators and program staff; stakeholders who have an interest in the evaluation; and the participants in the evaluation. To maximize potential use of the evaluation, all steps must be guided by input from stakeholders. In its simplest form, evaluation may be viewed as a puzzle that requires the team to answer the following question: *Who* needs to know *what* about our program *when*, and in *what form*?

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# APPENDIX A

## Program Evaluation Worksheets

Worksheet I: Team Member Skill Checklist

Worksheet II: Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Worksheet III: Focusing Matrix

Worksheet IV: Program Description

Worksheet V: Evaluation Questions

Worksheet VI: Information Collection Plan

Worksheet VII: Data Analysis Plan

Worksheet VIII: Report Generation Plan

Worksheet IX: Evaluation Management Plan

# WORKSHEET I

## TEAM MEMBER SKILL CHECKLIST

TEAM MEMBER NAME(S)

| PROGRAM EXPERTISE | BILL S. | MOLLY B. | KATHRYN M. | ANN S. | JACK R. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Policies/Procedures | X | | | X | | |
| Program Administration | X | | | X | | |
| Program Content/Curriculum | | X | X | | X | |
| Program Participants | | X | X | | | |
| Other (specify): | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| EVALUATION EXPERTISE | | | | | | |
| Group Process Techniques | X | | | X | X | |
| Program Design | | | X | X | X | |
| Information Collection | | | | X | | |
| Data Analysis | | | | X | | |
| Reporting | X | | | X | | |
| Evaluation Management | | | | X | | |
| Others (specify): | | | | | | |
| Focus Group Interviews | | | | | X | |

# WORKSHEET II

## STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN

EVALUATION PLANNING FUNCTIONS

| STAKEHOLDERS | FOCUSING | PROGRAM DESCRIPTION | EVALUATION QUESTIONS | DATA COLLECTION | DATA ANALYSIS | REPORTING | BUDGET MANAGEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Special Education Administrator | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| Special Education Program Staff | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| Special Education Advisory Committee | X | | X | | X | X | |
| Principals | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| Superintendent | X | | X | | | | |
| School Board Members | X | | X | | | | |
| State DOE Staff | X | | X | | | | |
| Parents | X | | X | | | | |
| Nonparent Community Members | | | | | | | |
| Related Services Staff | | | | | | | |
| Classroom Teachers | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| Advocacy Groups | X | | X | | | | |
| Other: | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

## WORKSHEET III

### FOCUSING MATRIX

| PROGRAM COMPONENT NAME | RELATIVE NEED FOR EVALUATION |  |  | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | ESSENTIAL | NECESSARY | LIMITED |  |
| Child Find |  |  | X | Formal evaluation completed last year |
| Teacher Assistance Teams | X |  |  | New initiative |
| Child Study/Assessment |  | X |  |  |
| Eligibility |  |  | X |  |
| IEP Development |  | X |  |  |
| Delivery of Instruction and Related Services |  | X |  |  |
| Parent Involvement |  |  | X | Comprehensive evaluation recently completed |
| Professional Collaboration |  | X |  |  |
| Transition Programming | X |  |  | Federal regs and state initiatives |
| Staff Development |  | X |  | Special focus on general education teachers |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# WORKSHEET IV

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM COMPONENT: Teacher Assistance Teams

| RESOURCE (INPUTS) | ACTIVITIES (PROCESSES) | OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES) |
|---|---|---|
| ■ *Teacher Assistance Teams* Handbook describing the program, procedures, and forms | ■ Classroom teacher requests assistance with a learning or behavior concern | ■ Completed action plans that include the intervention goals, selected strategies, evaluation procedures, and follow-up schedules |
| ■ Teams of three classroom teachers elected by their peers and trained in team problem solving | ■ One team member confers with the teacher to focus concerns | ■ Achievement of defined intervention goals for students in inclusive settings |
| ■ Requests for assistance from teachers in the building | ■ Teacher meets with assistance team to identify intervention goal, brainstorm alternatives, select strategies, and develop an action plan | ■ General educators' increased understanding and acceptance of special needs of students |
| ■ Documentation of student performance | | |
| ■ Administrative support for team members and users | ■ Teacher meets with team to review progress and plan follow-up as needed | ■ Teacher perceptions of support from colleagues on assistance teams |
| ■ Scheduled meeting time and space | | |

## WORKSHEET V

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

| EVALUATION QUESTION(S) | STANDARD/INFORMATION NEEDS |
|---|---|
| 1. Do action plans completed by assistance teams include all required components? | ■ Evidence that all sections of the action plan are completed for each teacher's request for assistance |
| 2. Do teachers who have used assistance teams perceive the process as responsive to their needs? | ■ Evidence that at least 80 percent of teachers who have used the assistance teams rate the process as helpful to them |

## WORKSHEET VI

### INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN

| EVALUATION QUESTION # | COLLECTION STRATEGY | DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE | ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Are the action plans complete? | Evaluation team will review all action plans using a checklist based on required components of the action plan detailed in the Handbook | 8/1-8/15 | 1/1-1/31 and 6/15-6/30 |
| 2. What are the teachers' perceptions? | Evaluation team will conduct focus group interviews with a 10% random sample of teachers using assistance teams and then follow up with a survey of all teacher users | Focus groups<br>11/1-11/15<br>Survey development<br>1/21-2/5<br>Survey refinement<br>5/16-5/30 | Focus groups<br>1/5-1/20 and 5/1-5/15<br>Survey<br>2/20-3/5 and 6/1-6/15 |

# WORKSHEET VII

## DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

| COLLECTION STRATEGY | DATA ANALYSIS | DATA ANALYST | AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | DRAFT | FINAL |
| Checklist | Frequency counts by checklist item aggregated across assistance team users; preliminary cross-tabs by grade and presenting problems | Ann S. | Round 1-2/15<br>Round 2-6/1 | 2/28<br>6/15 |
| Teacher Perceptions | Focus group-content analyses looking for common themes within and across groups | Jack R. | Round 1-2/1<br>Round 2-5/20 | 2/15<br>5/30 |
| | Survey-frequency counts, means, and standard deviations by item preliminary; cross-tabs by grade and problem | Ann S. | Round 1-3/14<br>Round 2-6/20 | 3/20<br>6/30 |

# WORKSHEET VII

## DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

| COLLECTION STRATEGY | DATA ANALYSIS | DATA ANALYST | AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | DRAFT | FINAL |
| Checklist | Frequency counts by checklist item aggregated across assistance team users; preliminary cross-tabs by grade and presenting problems | Ann S. | Round 1-2/15<br>Round 2-6/1 | 2/28<br>6/15 |
| Teacher Perceptions | Focus group-content analyses looking for common themes within and across groups | Jack R. | Round 1-2/1<br>Round 2-5/20 | 2/15<br>5/30 |
| | Survey-frequency counts, means, and standard deviations by item preliminary; cross-tabs by grade and problem | Ann S. | Round 1-3/14<br>Round 2-6/20 | 3/20<br>6/30 |

## WORKSHEET VIII

### REPORT GENERATION PLAN

| REPORT NAME | EVALUATION QUESTION(S) ADDRESSED | REPORT FORMAT | AUDIENCE(S) | PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | REPORT DEADLINE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interim Report | Action plan/user perception | Oral, written (executive summary) | Building Staff | Bill/Jack/Ann | 3/30 |
| Final Report | Action plan/user perception | Oral, written, with videotape of sample assistance team meetings and focus groups | Building Staff/Special Education Advisory Committee/School Board | Bill/Jack/Ann | 7/15 |

# WORKSHEET IX

## EVALUATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS | SUBTASKS | PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | EXPECTED | | MONITORING COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | START | COMPLETION | |
| 1. Are the action plans complete? | ■ Develop checklist based on Handbook | Ann S. | 8/1 | 8/15 | |
| | ■ Collect all action plans for each semester | Molly | 9/15<br>4/1 | 12/20<br>5/30 | |
| | ■ Review action plans and complete checklists | Ann/Molly | 10/1<br>1/15 | 1/31<br>1/30 | |
| | ■ Summarize data | Ann | 12/15 | 2/28 | |
| | ■ Prepare and present reports | Bill | 2/28<br>1/15 | 6/15<br>3/30 | |
| 2. What are the teachers' perceptions? | ■ Develop interview protocols for focus groups | Jack | 6/15<br>11/1 | 7/15<br>11/15 | |
| | ■ Schedule and conduct focus groups | Kathryn | 12/15<br>4/15 | 1/5<br>5/1 | |
| | ■ Analyze and code responses | Jack | 2/1<br>5/20 | 2/15<br>5/30 | |
| | ■ Prepare and present | Bill | 1/15<br>6/15 | 3/30<br>7/15 | |
| | ■ Design and field test survey | Ann/Jack | 1/21<br>5/16 | 2/5<br>5/30 | |
| | ■ Administer survey | Kathryn | 2/20<br>6/1 | 3/5<br>6/15 | |
| | ■ Summarize descriptive data | Ann | 3/14<br>6/20 | 3/20<br>6/30 | |
| | ■ Prepare and present report | Bill | 1/15<br>6/15 | 3/30<br>7/15 | |

# *Professional Development and Support*

### Chapter 12

# Planning and Implementing Effective Staff Development Programs

*Beverly V. Cline, Bonnie S. Billingsley, and Michele Farley*

## INTRODUCTION

Staff development is "the provision of activities designed to advance the knowledge, skills, and understanding of teachers in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behavior" (Fenstermacher & Berliner, 1983, p. 4). Unfortunately, staff development programs are often ineffective. Guskey (1986) observed that almost every major study of staff development in the last 30 years has emphasized its general lack of effectiveness. Reasons offered for ineffective programs include failure to identify relevant staff development needs and priorities, offering one-shot and disjointed inservice programs, and lack of follow-up assistance. However, with systematic assessment and planning, staff development programs can be effective.

This chapter provides guidance to those responsible for staff development programs by addressing the following three questions:

1. **How can staff development needs be assessed?**
2. **What are best practices for planning and implementing staff development programs?**
3. **How can the effectiveness of the staff development program be determined?**

## 1. HOW CAN STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS BE ASSESSED?

Assessing needs is critical, since effective staff development programs are based on participants' needs. The first section of this chapter provides a variety of strategies that can be used to assess staff development needs and identify priorities for training. Examples of needs assessment instruments are included in the appendixes.

### Assessing Staff Development Needs

Effective staff development programs are based on participants' needs (Daresh, 1989). Therefore, educational leaders must assess the professional development needs of all staff members systematically. A variety of information sources and data collection methods can be used to determine needs. By using a variety of sources, administrators can examine needs more comprehensively. Close inspection might reveal that some identified needs result from systemic problems such as inadequate resources rather than from insufficient training.

### Information Sources

Individuals who may be helpful in identifying and prioritizing training needs include those who work or live with students who receive special education, personnel who supervise the programs, and professionals who help set standards for service delivery. Examples of these groups of people include the following:

- Building-level personnel (e.g., teachers, principals, guidance counselors, etc.).
- Students and their families.
- District-level supervisors (e.g., special education, pupil personnel, or specialty area).
- Professionals outside the school system (e.g., state level supervisors, those involved in setting certification standards, experts, university faculty, etc.).

Other sources of information include program descriptions; personnel records; student records; certification standards; and professional literature.

### Methods of Collecting Information

Methods of collecting information include needs assessment instruments, interviews, observations, and reviews of records. The examples that follow illustrate possible approaches to collecting information on training needs.

#### Needs Assessment Instruments

Administrators and supervisors can use questionnaires to assess the training needs of special and general education personnel and to establish staff development priorities for these personnel. These may be open-ended or structured instruments. An example of an instrument designed for assessing the staff development needs of special education personnel is included in Appendix A. (For additional instruments for other teachers and related services personnel, see Cline et al., 1991a and 1991b.)

#### Interviews

Personnel can be invited to participate in individual or group interviews to (a) discuss needs for professional development or (b) clarify or expand on their responses to questionnaire items. Possible strategies for identifying and prioritizing needs include brainstorming, consensus building, and nominal group techniques (VanGundy, 1988).

### Observations

Personnel can be observed by immediate supervisors, peers, or experts as they work with students or their families. Observation data provide information about what is working well, in addition to needs for staff development.

### Surveys, Research, Outside Experts

Supervisors can consult outside experts, certification standards, and the professional literature regarding what professional competencies are needed, what personnel should be doing, and what level and type of services should be offered. Supervisors can compare these ideal descriptions to what the situation actually is in their district. The discrepancies between "what should be" and "what is" are the needs to be addressed.

### Assurances

Those responding to questionnaires should be assured that their responses will be treated confidentially. However, in instances where there are only one or two representatives of a personnel category in the school district, true confidentiality may be impossible. Other assurances should be given relating to who will use the information and for what purposes.

### Analyze Content

Once needs have been assessed, supervisors should perform the following steps to analyze the information gathered and determine staff needs:

1. List needs and assign them to categories.
2. Analyze and prioritize needs by topic areas and by special interest groups.
3. Use analyses to formulate goals for the staff development program.

## 2. WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS?

Recent literature on staff development provides guidance to those responsible for planning and conducting staff development programs. Findings from the literature are highlighted in the following section.

## Staff Development Options

Staff development formats and topics can vary depending on the staff development objectives and participants' learning styles and needs (Laycock & Patton, 1991).

### Formats

Current research on effective staff training suggests that programs delivered in a variety of formats are more likely to produce desired changes in practice than those that are not (Brandt, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1980; Villa, 1989). Staff developers should seek participant input and then offer participants training options that address their personal needs and professional developmental stages. Current best practices (Villa, 1989) include the following options:

- Graduate courses.
- Workshops.
- Staff meetings.
- Contracted inservice programs.
- Optional inservice programs for recertification.
- Mini-sessions.
- Teacher centers.
- Visits to other schools or classrooms (either inside or outside the system).
- Videotape applications.
- Summer institutes.
- Regional conferences.

### Topics

Villa (1989) has suggested that four levels of training be offered in any school district. **Level One** provides appropriate training for any member of the school and community and may include such topics as effective schools research, best practices in special education, and models for collaboration and teaming.

**Level Two** provides more in-depth knowledge of legal issues and best practices to parents, community members, and school personnel. Training can be developed that addresses identified needs in the following areas (Villa, 1989, p. 174):

- Parent and community involvement.
- Parent-professional partnerships.
- Legal rights and safeguards.
- Individualized Education Plans.
- Behavior management.
- Community-based training.
- Building a work history before graduation.
- Transition between school environments.
- Transition to adult services.
- Interagency cooperation.
- Post-high-school follow-up.

**Level Three** provides training for instructional personnel and supervisors who are trying to offer more heterogeneous instructional opportunities for students. These topics may include the following (Villa, 1989):

- Outcome-based instruction.
- Cooperative learning.
- Computer-assisted instruction.
- Positive behavior management.
- Teaching social skills.
- Peer tutoring.

**Level Four** provides training for supervisory personnel. Supervisors need training for their roles as observers and supervisors of instruction (Villa, 1989).

## Inservice Programs

The most common but most unpopular type of staff development is the inservice program. Inservice programs may take the form of several of the options just listed, but most frequently they are presented through lectures and demonstrations, with little audience participation. Research indicates that when inservice programs are presented for the sole purpose of transmitting information, there is little change in the practices of the participants (Korinek, Schmid, & McAdams, 1985). For inservice programs to be effective, they must combine information with a series of sequenced skill-acquisition objectives presented over several sessions. These are developed through a well-planned assessment of needs, careful observation, and systematic record keeping. A well designed inservice program should allow participants to become actively involved in learning and translating new knowledge into practice.

Successful inservice programs provide participants with opportunities to reflect on and discuss current practices in light of new knowledge. Effective techniques include

- Reviewing the theory behind the approach.
- Reviewing videotapes of the actual process.
- Role playing and simulations.
- Demonstrating with debriefing about problem areas.
- Coaching and teaching the skill to others.

Inservice training sessions should always be followed by supervised opportunities for application such as mentoring, coaching, and/or clinical supervision (Joyce & Showers, 1980; Lambert, 1989; Villa, 1989).

## Planning Staff Development Programs

### Identify Needs

Successful staff development programs are those in which staff members actively participate in planning. Participants who perceive that their own individual needs are being addressed develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the proposed changes in practice (Korinek et al., 1985). The first part of this chapter outlined methods that may be used to assess participant needs. The content and format of the staff development program should be specific to the assessed needs (Minix & Pearce, 1986).

## Consider the Characteristics of Adult Learners

Those planning staff development programs need to consider the unique characteristics of adult learners. Adults have more experiences than children and adolescents, and they seek to connect new learning with past experiences. They prefer to have a say in what is learned and need opportunities to relate content to current endeavors. Many adults fear change and appreciate a learning environment that is nonthreatening (Laycock & Patton, 1991). Most adults produce their own motivation for learning (e.g., teachers seek ideas they can use to solve their classroom problems). However, those planning and implementing staff development programs can encourage and create conditions that will nurture what already exists in the adult learner (Wood & Thompson, 1980). Appendix B contains a list of characteristics of adult learners that staff development planners should find helpful as they develop responsive programs.

## Establish Goals and Objectives

A decision-making group of key stakeholders should establish goals and objectives that are specific to local needs (Minix & Pearce, 1986) and address the unique needs of each participating group. These goals and objectives also should address participants' needs at different stages of their professional development (Peterson, 1987) and reflect the characteristics of the adult learner (Lambert, 1989; Minix & Pearce, 1986). The goals guide the development of the plan and should be clear and action oriented (Creamer, 1986). Objectives based on prioritized needs provide the framework for the sequence of staff development activities. Once goals and objectives are set, a list of proposed sessions and activities can be developed and disseminated to staff members.

## Obtain Commitments

The success of staff development programs is dependent on obtaining serious commitments from participants, administrators, and school district personnel (Creamer, 1986; Minix & Pearce, 1986; Palinscar, Ransom, & Derber, 1989). Staff members may be provided with a list of proposed sessions and activities and asked to rank-order those they would most likely attend. They may also indicate the format and times they prefer for training activities (Korinek et al., 1985).

Commitment must be obtained from administrators to provide the staff and resources necessary to implement the programs (Creamer, 1986; Glatthorn, 1990; Minix & Pearce, 1986). Commitments are also needed from program presenters. These may include external presenters (e.g., university faculty, State Department of Education consultants, text or materials representatives) and/or internal presenters (e.g., expert teachers, supervisors, principals, other central office administrators) depending on the goals of the program (Minix & Pearce, 1986).

Design the Program

A formal written plan should be developed indicating topics, activities, and formats that have been selected for the program. The plan should consider best practices, participant characteristics, participant input, and available resources. It should also include the following:

- A description of the roles and responsibilities of program facilitators.
- Timelines that indicate the desired sequence of activities.
- Procedures for evaluating both the individual activities and the total staff development program (Creamer, 1986).
- Procedures for continual feedback and follow-up to initial training (Palinscar, Ransom, & Derber, 1989; Showers, 1990) and opportunities for teacher collaboration (Glatthorn, 1990).

## Incentives

Staff developers should try to establish an atmosphere of collegiality and trust (Darling-Hammond & Foster, 1987; Glatthorn, 1990; Lambert, 1989), provide a wide choice of training options, and build in meaningful incentives and rewards to encourage participation of staff members. Incentives such as the following might be considered (Garmston, 1987; Little, 1985; Villa, 1989):

### Extrinsic Incentives

- Graduate course credit.
- Recertification credit.
- Salary increases due to training.
- Reimbursement of expenses for training.
- Release time.
- Child care provisions during training.
- Continuing education credits.

### Intrinsic Incentives

- Professional growth.

- Contribution of knowledge to the field.

- Professional recognition.

- Increased collegiality with peers.

- Opportunities for leadership.

## 3. HOW CAN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BE DETERMINED?

The best practices described in the previous sections become the standard by which the actual staff development program will be judged. To make these judgments, the evaluator must use systematic evaluation procedures to determine the extent to which staff needs and interests have been met and to plan for future staff development programs (Effectiveness Indicators for Special Education, 1986).

Specific evaluation questions include (a) "Did the staff development program meet its objectives?"; (b) "How can we improve this program during future offerings?"; (c) "In what ways have personnel changed their behaviors as a result of the programs?"; and (d) "What additional training needs have staff identified?"

### Evaluating the Staff Development Program

Any aspect of a staff development program can be evaluated, such as the program's goals, design, implementation, and/or outcomes (Popham, 1988). Once the evaluator decides what aspects should be evaluated, a decision can be made about what information is needed or what questions should be asked. These questions will guide the remainder of the evaluation. (A checklist that may be helpful in determining whether best practices are incorporated in the evaluation plan can be found in Appendix C).

### Choosing the Evaluation Questions

The list of possible evaluation questions is endless, but the following are examples that may be used for each aspect of the program:

Evaluation Questions Related to **Goals**

- Do the goals of the staff development program reflect the needs and interests of staff?

- Are the goals of the staff development program realistic? (e.g., can they be met considering the resources available, the format offered, and the participants' characteristics?)

Evaluation Questions Related to the Program **Design**

- Is the plan or design consistent with best practices for staff development?
- Are sufficient resources available for implementing the staff development plan?

Evaluation Questions Related to **Implementation**

- Has the program been carried out according to plan?
- Was the presentation timely and convenient?
- Was the speaker knowledgeable and prepared?
- Were the facilities adequate?
- Were refreshments and breaks scheduled adequately?
- Were materials and handouts available?
- Were evaluation forms distributed?

Evaluation Questions Related to **Outcomes** of Staff Development

- To what extent were the learning objectives met?
- To what extent did meeting these objectives reduce the need for training (Knowlton, 1980)?

### Answering the Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are answered by collecting information from a variety of sources, using a variety of methods. For example, Knowlton (1980) suggested the following:

- **Pretest/posttest** approaches may be used to determine immediate training outcomes.
- **Observations** of participants during training may provide feedback that allows for immediate change in the training sessions.

- **Long-term follow-up** allows the evaluator to determine the effectiveness of training by observing participant behavior and/or student progress. Follow-up also allows the evaluator to discover needs for ongoing technical assistance.

### Making Judgments

Judgments are made about the effectiveness of programs by comparing "what should be" with "what is" (McLaughlin, 1988). In other words, performance information that is collected prior to, during, and following training ("what is") is compared to the delineation of "what should be" in the program description (see Chapter 2, "Program Vision and Descriptions").

Judgments about staff development program effectiveness or needs for modification are based on the presence or absence of discrepancies between the actual and the ideal. These judgments form the basis for making programming decisions. The checklist in Appendix C may help in determining the existence of discrepancies.

## SUMMARY

Staff development is important to the continued professional development of teachers. Planning relevant staff development programs requires an understanding of the audiences needs as well as knowledge about planning and implementing effective programs. This chapter provided guidelines for assessing staff development needs, outlined best practices for staff development programs, and suggested how staff development programs might be evaluated.

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# APPENDIX A

## Assessment Instrument for Special Education Personnel

# Staff Development Questionnaire for Teachers of Students with Emotional Disturbance, Learning Disabilities, and Educable Mental Retardation

This questionnaire is designed to assess the staff development needs of special education teachers. The results will be used by the Virginia Department of Education to develop the Virginia Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) plan. You, as teachers, know most about your needs. Your input can contribute much to alleviating problems associated with working with special needs students. Your response to this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and only a summary of the findings will be reported. Thank you for your assistance.

*Source: Cline, B., Radcliffe, P., Billingsley, B., Schetz, K., Egner, S., & Cross, L. (1991a). Assessment of Staff Development Needs for Special Education Teachers and Speech-Language Pathologists. Final report submitted to the Virginia Department of Education, Richmond.*

*For an indepth report of the results of this particular survey, see Radcliffe, P. M. (1992). A comparison of staff development needs of beginning and experienced special education teachers of the mildly disabled. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg.*

## Virginia Department of Education

## Staff Development Questionnaire for Teachers of Students with Emotional Disturbance, Learning Disabilities, and Educable Mental Retardation

*IMPORTANT: An opscan answer sheet is provided for recording responses to each item. Item numbers listed on the left side of each question must match the item number on the opscan answer sheet. Use a #2 pencil to record your answer on the answer sheet. Blacken the circle that corresponds to your answer. Please carefully follow all directions regarding the use of the answer sheet. The recording format is somewhat different for Parts I and II.

Part I. Training Needs

IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE RELEVANT TO YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU FEEL A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING IN THESE AREAS.

FIRST, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS RELEVANT TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION. SECOND, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU FEEL A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING IN EACH AREA. ON THE ANSWER SHEET, RESPONSE OPTIONS NUMBERED 1-4 CORRESPOND TO RELEVANCE AND RESPONSE OPTIONS NUMBERED 6-9 CORRESPOND TO NEED. FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE ANSWER SHEET IF THE ITEM IS VERY RELEVANT TO YOUR JOB BUT YOU HAVE NO NEED FOR FURTHER TRAINING, BLACKEN CIRCLE "4" AND CIRCLE "6" RESPONSE OPTION "5" ON THE ANSWER SHEET SHOULD BE LEFT BLANK FOR PART I, TRAINING NEEDS.

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

ASSESSMENT/DIAGNOSIS

1. Know legal provisions regarding due process and nondiscriminatory assessment of students with disabilities

2. Understand definitions, characteristics, and identification procedures specific to students with disabilities

3. Aware of cultural factors that influence the assessment process

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

ASSESSMENT/DIAGNOSIS (con't)

4. Aware of special health problems which may occur concomitantly with learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, and mental retardation (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy)

5. Evaluate and select assessment instruments based on appropriateness, reliability and validity

6. Administer, score, and interpret standardized, diagnostic, and achievement tests

7. Design and administer informal tests (e.g., criterion referenced tests, teacher-made tests)

8. Design and use curriculum-based assessment

9. Administer, score, and interpret adaptive behavior measures

10. Use systematic observations for academic and social assessments

11. Understand and interpret reports generated by multidisciplinary assessments

12. Communicate assessment information (oral and written format)

*NOTE: Reconsider items 1-12 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) PLANNING AND PLACEMENT

13. Generate goals and objectives based on current level of educational performance

14. Know when and how to develop, revise, and implement the IEP

15. Know who must be present at an IEP committee meeting

16. Involve parents in the development of the IEP

17. Know the essential elements of each IEP component (e.g., present level of educational performance, annual goals, short term objectives, etc.)

18. Develop a behavior management plan in the IEP

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| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) PLANNING AND PLACEMENT (con't)

19. Participate in transition planning for students (e.g., moving from middle to high school; moving from high school to job placement or further training/education; movement from special education to general education)

20. Know that all services listed in the IEP must be provided to the student as specified

21. Know how to determine when a student is in need of extended school year services (i.e., programs or services provided beyond the 180 school days if child shows need)

22. Know how to access extended school year services within the locality

23. Know when and how often placement decisions should be made

24. Make well-informed contributions to placement decisions

25. Know what placement options are and should be available locally

26. Indicate the extent to which students with disabilities will participate in mainstreamed academic, non-academic and extracurricular activities

***NOTE:** Reconsider items 13-26 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.

INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION

27. Understand the issues related to integrating students with disabilities into mainstream activities (e.g., emotional, social, academic and related service)

28. Use a variety of effective strategies for integrating students with disabilities into the general education program

29. Establish cooperative relationships with general and special education classroom teachers

**Collaborate effectively with general educators in developing academic, behavioral interventions, and accommodations:**

30. At the prereferral level for at-risk students

31. For nondisabled students who are experiencing problems in the classroom

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant<br>1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant<br>4 | No Need<br>6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need<br>9 |

INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION (con't)

32. For integrating students with disabilities into general education programs

***NOTE: Reconsider items 27-32 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.**

CURRICULUM

33. Understand major curricula approaches (e.g., remedial, tutorial, affective, behavioral, self help, vocational training, developmental)

**Identify, analyze, evaluate and modify curricula (goals, materials, methods) to teach the following instructional areas:**

34. Reading Skills

35. Written/Oral Language

36. Listening Comprehension

37. Math

38. Science

39. Social Studies/History

40. Physical Education

41. Health/Family Life

42. Social/Interpersonal skills

43. Career/Vocational skills

44. Learning Strategies/Study Skills

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

CURRICULUM (CON'T)

Facilitate language development by:

- 45. Understanding the milestones of normal language development
- 46. Understanding language disorders related to exceptional learners
- 47. Awareness of cultural differences in language use
- 48. Understanding relationships between normal receptive and expressive language development (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling)

49. Aware of individual differences which may affect career and vocational decisions (e.g., abilities, values, and physical conditions)

50. Use knowledge of state and local economic conditions, employment opportunities and entry level skills when providing guidance tc students

*NOTE: Reconsider items 33-50 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

51. Teach multiple subjects to students with a variety of ability levels and learning styles

52. Plan lessons and activities based on assessment information about students' problems

53. Provide systematic instruction which enables students to achieve lesson objectives and long-term goals (e.g., task analysis)

54. Select methods/materials that match students' needs and learning objectives

55. Use various media as an integral part of the instructional procedure (e.g., computers, audiovisual aids)

56. Communicate realistic expectations to students

57. Provide direct instruction that promotes maintenance and generalization of skills (e.g., modeling, guided practice, pacing of lessons, sufficient time for practice, etc.)

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES (con't)

58. Use alternative teaching strategies (e.g., choral responding, peer tutoring, cooperative learning)

59. Use verbal, gestural, and physical prompts during instruction

60. Help students develop strategies that enable them to become independent learners (e.g., self-monitoring, self-evaluation, study skills)

61. Monitor and evaluate student progress continuously by using graphs, anecdotal records, progress reports, etc.

62. Evaluate and modify instructional techniques based on student progress

***NOTE: Reconsider items 51-62 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.**

BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

63. Understand ethical and legal responsibilities associated with behavioral interventions

64. Understand how various factors influence the interpretation of what is normal (e.g., chronological age, developmental level, cultural values)

65. Understand behavior theory as it relates to learning

66. Implement a variety of behavior interventions (e.g., contracts, cognitive behavior strategies, life-space interview)

67. Maintain classroom order by using a positive and consistent approach (e.g., cuing, redirection reinforcement)

68. Motivate students by identifying interests and appropriate reinforcers

69. Understand when and how to use crisis management techniques

***NOTE: Reconsider items 63-69 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.**

| Relevance | | | | Need | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Relevant 1 | 2 | 3 | Very Relevant 4 | No Need 6 | 7 | 8 | Great Need 9 |

**ADVOCACY AND OTHER ISSUES**

70. Communicate effectively with other professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents (e.g., verbal and written reports, completion of forms, checklist, etc.)

71. Initiate and maintain cooperative relationships with parents, educators, and non-school personnel

72. Conduct conferences with parents or other professionals

73. Use a variety of approaches to encourage parent involvement

74. Develop, implement, and evaluate home-school interventions

75. Comply with federal and state regulations related to the education of students with disabilities (e.g., due process procedures, suspension/expulsion guidelines, confidential issues)

76. Understand the suspension/expulsion guidelines for students with disabilities

77. Develop and implement time and stress management skills for myself

78. Serve as student advocate

79. Facilitate learning experiences that promote self-esteem in students with disabilities

80. Help students understand their disabilities

*NOTE: Reconsider items 70-80 and identify your most critical training need by blackening response option "10" for that item.

Part II. Demographic Information

Please provide the following information about yourself (Blacken the circle on the answer sheet that corresponds to your response choice for each item).

81. Age (1) 25 or less (2) 26-30 (3) 31-35 (4) 36-40 (5) 41-45 (6) 46-50 (7) 51-55 (8) 56-60 (9) 61+

82. Gender 1) Female
2) Male

83. Which best describes you?

(1) White (2) Black (3) Other

84. Highest level of education: (1) Bachelors Degree
(2) Masters Degree
(3) Specialist
(4) Doctorate

85. How many years experience have you had in education altogether (including teaching and non-teaching experience)?

(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6-10 (7) 11-14 (8) 15-19 (9) 20-25 (10) 26+

86. How many years of teaching experience have you had?

(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6-10 (7) 11-14 (8) 15-19 (9) 20-25 (10) 26+

87. How many years have you taught in special education?

(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6-10 (7) 11-14 (8) 15-19 (9) 20-25 (10) 26+

88. What area of exceptionality are you presently teaching (Choose only one)?

(1) Seriously Emotionally Disturbed
(2) Learning Disabled
(3) Educable Mentally Retarded
(4) Other

89. What is the general level of most students you serve? (Choose primary assignment if more than one)

(1) Elementary
(2) Middle School/Junior High
(3) Secondary/High School
(4) Post Secondary/Adult Services

90. What type of setting are you currently teaching? (Choose primary assignment if more than one)

(1) Consulting teacher
(2) Itinerant
(3) Resource
(4) Combined resource/self-contained
(5) Self-contained
(6) Special school
(7) Home-based/Hospital instruction

Thank you for your assistance.

Please return only the opscan sheet (do not fold).

# APPENDIX B

## Characteristics of Adult Learners

## Characteristics of Adult Learners

1. Adult learning styles differ from those of children and adolescents (Christensen, 1983).

2. Adults bring a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, skills, self-direction, interests, and competence to any learning experience (Wood & Thompson, 1980).

3. Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are realistic and relevant to their experiences, interests, and needs (Brookfield, 1989).

4. Adults want to be involved in directing their own learning, selecting objectives, content, activities, and assessment methods (Hostler, 1977; Patterson, 1979).

5. Adults learn best through concrete experiences in which they apply what is being learned and in informal situations where social interactions take place (Wood & Thompson, 1980).

6. Adult learners need to see the results of their efforts and to have accurate feedback on progress toward their goals (Wood & Thompson, 1980).

7. Adult learning is ego involved; adults will resist learning situations they believe are an attack on their competence (Daloz, 1986; Neimi & Gooler, 1987; Wood, Thompson, & Russell, 1981).

8. Adult learning is influenced by personal stages of development (Andrews, Houston, & Bryant, 1981; Brundage & Macheracher, 1980).

9. Many adults fear change and perceived new demands and may develop strategies to impede significant change (Neimi & Gooler, 1987).

10. Adult learning is enhanced by planner and trainer behaviors and strategies that demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for the learner (Wood & Thompson, 1980).

# APPENDIX C

## Staff Development Checklist

## Staff Development Checklist

____1. Have staff development needs been identified and prioritized?

____2. Have goals and objectives been planned that are specific to local needs?

____3. Have building-/district-level administrators and school board members made strong commitments to the program in the form of staff and resources?

____4. Are key stakeholders (including participants) involved in planning each aspect of the program (e.g., design, incentives, evaluation)?

5. Has a formal plan been developed that indicates:

_____ topics?
_____ activities?
_____ formats?
_____ roles and responsibilities of program facilitators?
_____ timelines for activities?
_____ evaluation criteria and procedures?

____6. Are incentives for participation built in to the program?

____7. Are staff members committed to participating in the program?

8. Does the program content:

_____ address assessed needs?
_____ recognize the characteristics of adult learners?
_____ address needs that are specific to the participants' level of professional development?

9. Following initial training, does the program allow for coaching in the form of

_____ sharing of ideas and information?
_____ technical feedback?
_____ application analysis?
_____ adaptation of techniques for students?
_____ facilitating skill acquisition through ongoing support and assistance?

## Chapter 13

# Supporting Experienced and Beginning Teachers of Students with Disabilities

*Bonnie S. Billingsley, Cynthia Warger, Peggy Littrell,*
*and Ellen Tomchin*

## INTRODUCTION

Administrative support is critical to the professional success and self esteem of teachers (Rosenholtz, 1989). Teachers who characterize their administrators as supportive experience more career success (Chapman & Lowther, 1982), find work more motivating and satisfying (Rosenholtz, 1989), and, not surprisingly, demonstrate much lower attrition rates (Metzke, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989). Teachers who receive support from their administrators can also expect to experience less job-related stress and burnout (Zabel & Zabel, 1982), have fewer illnesses, and generally hold more positive work-related attitudes (Dworkin, 1987).

For a variety of reasons, special education teachers often do not receive the administrative support they need to be successful and feel good about their work (Breton & Donaldson, 1991; Fimian, 1986; Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Schetz & Billingsley, 1992; Tyler, 1987). For administrators, this lack of support generally is not intentional -- rather it arises from their not realizing that they have a major role to play in supporting special education teachers, and in not knowing what they can do to address the unique needs that special education teachers face in the workplace.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide practical strategies that administrators, at both the building and central office level, can use to support special education teachers. Because beginning special education teachers have more intense needs, which if left unmet often result in their leaving the profession, specific advice tailored to this group will also be given. This chapter addresses the following questions:

1. **What is support?**
2. **How can administrators support special education teachers?**
3. **What are some of the special support needs of beginning special education teachers?**
4. **What are some strategies for supporting beginning special education teachers?**

## 1. WHAT IS SUPPORT?

Administrators are well aware of the numerous ways in which they support their general education teaching staff. On a daily basis, administrators are in a position to show emotional support through all of their interpersonal dealings. As a manager, they make available necessary resources and materials. In the role of instructional leader, administrators provide many professional growth opportunities for teachers ranging from information sharing to structured feedback. Many of these same support strategies are applicable to their special education teachers as well. The key in applying many of these support strategies is in understanding how certain aspects of the special education context influence teaching success.

House (1981) provides an excellent conceptualization for considering the different types of administrative support. In House's framework, administrators typically provide support in four areas: emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational. Following is a brief description of these four types of administrative support. The next section describes how administrators might tailor strategies associated with each of these types of support to the context of special education.

### Emotional Support

When administrators relate to teachers by showing them that they are esteemed, trusted professionals and worthy of concern, emotional support is demonstrated. Of all of the types of support, emotional support is perhaps the most **important** to both general and special educators because it is at the core of positive working relationships (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1992). Administrators who use emotional support are characterized by teachers as being approachable and friendly. Their actions include the following:

- Maintaining open communication.
- Considering the teacher's ideas.
- Communicating confidence in the teacher.
- Taking an interest in the teacher's work.
- Showing appreciation.
- Encouraging teacher input into decisions.
- Treating all teachers as valuable, contributing members of the faculty.

## Appraisal Support

As instructional leaders, administrators are charged with personnel appraisal. When appraisal is viewed as an ongoing practice, one in which teachers are regularly provided with feedback about their work and given helpful information about what comprises effective performance, it can offer numerous opportunities for support. Administrators can provide appraisal support in the following ways:

- Give clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities.
- Offer frequent and constructive feedback.
- Provide standards for evaluating performance.

## Instrumental Support

Administrators have a major responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of the school, and as such can directly contribute in a positive way to helping teachers with everyday work-related tasks and concerns. Administrators can demonstrate support in this way by

- Ensuring adequate time for teaching and non-teaching duties.
- Providing necessary materials, adequate space, and resources.
- Being available to help with managerial-type concerns.
- Orchestrate opportunities for teachers to problem solve and arrive at solutions for addressing work-related difficulties.

## Informational Support

Facilitating professional development -- both long term and on a day-to-day basis -- involves providing teachers with useful information that they can use to improve their classroom practice. Whether it is setting up a peer coaching program, authorizing teachers' attendance at an inservice workshop, or talking over difficult classroom problems, administrators can use these opportunities to support their teachers. Administrators who provide informational support might

- Facilitate informal and formal sharing/collaboration opportunities among teachers.
- Offer practical information about effective teaching practices.

- Provide suggestions to improve instruction and classroom management dilemmas.

Using this support framework, administrators can expand their repertoire of strategies to address the needs of their special education teachers. The following sections provide illustrations of how administrators can support special education teachers and their work.

## 2. HOW CAN ADMINISTRATORS SUPPORT SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS?

There are certain aspects of the special education context that require specialized administrator support and attention. Because special educators work in varied contexts, teachers' specific support needs will differ, depending on their levels of experience, their expectations, their settings, and the students they serve. The key, as with any teacher, is to identify the particular support needs and set up conditions to meet those needs. The following strategies provide some specific ways of supporting special education teachers.

### Accept responsibility for the special education teaching staff.

Traditionally, special education has been viewed as a separate system. This "separateness" has resulted in many special education teachers feeling isolated and alone in their buildings. However, in recent years there has emerged a growing trend for administrators to acknowledge their responsibility for all students, including those with disabilities, and the teachers who serve them.

Emotional support can go a long way in eliminating this sense of separateness and isolation that many special education teachers feel. To help break this history of isolation, administrators might need, at first, to initiate frequent contacts. Administrators should periodically ask special education teachers what types of help they need, or ask them to respond to open-ended questions about their needs. Also, administrators should encourage teachers to tell them what they can do to help ease any problem situations.

Another way administrators can communicate acceptance and respect is through instrumental support. For example, administrators can make themselves available at meetings where the Individualized Educational Plan is developed and at child study team meetings, either in attendance or before/after for personal consultation with the teacher (Cherniss, 1988; Needle, Griffin, Svendsen, & Berney, 1980; Rosenholtz, 1989; Zielinske & Hoy, 1983). Some principals show their support of special education teachers and the work that they do by formally "dropping in" at parent conferences, where they take the opportunity to introduce themselves and pay tribute to the fine program that the special education teacher has established.

Finally, informational support can be particularly helpful. When there is a change in policy or guidelines affecting special education students or programs, do not assume that special education teachers have heard about it. Take time not only to communicate these types of changes, but also to discuss with teachers the practical implications of such changes. An excellent example is schoolwide discipline policies. Often special education students are affected, but seldom are their teachers involved in developing these policies -- which can prove to be a source of stress, especially in teachers of students with behavioral disorders (Pullis, 1992).

**Provide adequate working conditions for special educators.**

Adequate working conditions are important for positive morale and for doing one's job well. Administrators need to consider special education teachers as permanent school staff members and treat them like other staff by providing adequate space and necessary materials and resources (Cook & Leffingwell, 1982). Some special education teachers are split between buildings. For some of these teachers, their "official" office is located somewhere "downtown" in the central office, and they travel to schools to provide services. Too often, these teachers are expected to work wherever there happens to be space. If a special education teacher is split between two or more buildings, make use of instrumental support techniques. Reserve a space in each building for that teacher and ensure that it is maintained as that teacher's personal space. Leave standard memos and school announcements for the teacher, with an occasional personal note inviting the teacher to be a part of school "special" events.

Additionally, most special education teachers are required to perform non-teaching responsibilities such as attending mandated meetings, developing Individualized Educational Plans, completing official paperwork, and testing students, which often must be done at the convenience of others or at home (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Cook & Leffingwell, 1982). Instrumental support is needed for such tasks, as teachers still need time to prepare for instruction and actually teach. Special educators consistently identify too much paperwork as one of their major concerns, and as such, reducing unnecessary paperwork and meetings is an important form of support. The use of volunteers or substitute teachers may also be needed when workloads are particularly heavy.

**Acknowledge the contributions made by special education teachers to their students' education.**

For many students with special needs, progress is slow and infrequent. Unlike general education where certain learning milestones such as adding fractions and writing a complete sentence are present, a major learning milestone for a special needs student may not be quite so dramatic. Moreover, in the context of integration, too often the feedback to special education teachers on the student's performance is focused on the student's deficits, rather than on his or her accomplishments.

Emotional support in the form of acknowledgement and encouragement can provide that needed incentive to special education teachers to move forward. You can acknowledge the important contributions that special education teachers make to your school by taking time to notice what they do and by showing appreciation for their work.

**Help teachers work with the demands of their particular situation.**

Special educators can experience stress as a result of the pressures associated with working with difficult-to-teach students. A growing number of special education teachers are faced with violent and physically abusive students. Due to the intensity of characteristics of these students, a teacher might find that he or she must exert "constant supervision" throughout the day, leaving the teacher mentally and physically drained by the end of the day. Sometimes, just the sheer number of students or the wide range of ability levels represented in the classroom can result in the teacher feeling pressured.

Administrators can support special education teachers by understanding the unique composition of students in their classroom. When giving teachers feedback as part of appraisal support, make sure to dispel any unrealistic expectations. Sometimes, special education teachers need help seeing the objective reality -- they may not be able to reach all of the needs of all of their students by "tomorrow." If the teacher has a particularly challenging caseload, it might also be helpful to reduce extra-curricular duties. Pullis (1992) found that many special education teachers experience physical exhaustion just trying to keep up with all of the demands placed on them.

Finally, it is important to note that many special education teachers are forced to teach without adequate resources, which has been identified in the research as a situation underlying high levels of teacher exhaustion (Schmid, Schatz, Walter, Shidla, Leone, & Trickett, 1990). In the context of general education inclusion, special education teachers are often left without a set of textbooks, study guides, or other resources for helping their students succeed. As an administrator, make sure that teachers have the resources they need by including materials in the budget, requesting additional copies of teachers' manuals, and helping general education teachers see the importance of sharing materials. Additionally, copying equipment and secretarial support should be available in those instances where high priority materials are needed immediately.

**Provide an understanding and caring attitude toward students with disabilities.**

Unknowingly, some building administrators forget that their role as principal and school leader extends to those students with special needs. Emotional support directed at extending an open, caring attitude to students with disabilities reaps many benefits. Special education teachers remark how pleased they are when principals interact positively with their students, call them by name, and even find special duties for them. In fact, there is a growing body of research documenting how the principal can serve as a positive factor in helping students with disabilities meet the demands of behavioral management contracts by showing interest and allowing time spent with him or her to constitute a "reward" for the child.

**Provide ongoing support for the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education.**

Administrators are important to integrating students with disabilities into general education programs. Leadership is needed to facilitate the coordination of services that results in the successful placement of students with disabilities in academic, vocational and extracurricular programs on regular school campuses (Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988). Facilitating the collaboration between general and special educators (Miller, 1990), as well as the teamwork required to fulfill these shared responsibilities, is particularly important. Administrators can draw on informational support techniques to facilitate this initiative by providing forums for discussion, involving teachers in planning collaborative approaches, and making training available.

Instrumental support can also be used to help ease some of the initial dis-ease with which new programs are implemented. For example, when a student is integrated, there is a great deal of "start-up" time needed for planning a smooth transition. Providing release time to the special and general education teachers to meet during school hours can greatly reduce the stress and possible feelings of resentment that arise when teachers are expected to meet after school hours or on their own time to undertake such planning.

Finally, it is important to note that many special education teachers do not have curricular training in all of the subjects in which their students might be integrated. Trying to accommodate the needs of their students in a number of subject areas for which they have little training may leave special educators feeling overwhelmed. Informational support helps ease much of the tension here, if it is directed in a positive rather than in a judgmental manner. Special education teachers can be invited to sit in on curriculum planning committee meetings with subject area teachers. Collaborative arrangements may be set up between a special education and general education teacher. It is important not to assign too many content area subjects to the special education teacher, as it is not realistic to expect one teacher to have mastery over all subjects in a given year or semester.

**Support teachers who may be experiencing stress.**

Stress leads to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and teacher attrition (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Blase, Dedrick, & Strathe, 1986; Dworkin, 1987). In light of this, supportive administrators need to recognize signs of stress and provide sources of revitalization and renewal outside of the classroom. For example, administrators might encourage and assist in the formation of support groups to help teachers identify sources of stress (Beck & Gargiulo, 1983). Giving special educators an opportunity to discuss feelings and concerns will reduce problems of burnout (Crane & Iwanicki, 1986).

## 3. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SPECIAL SUPPORT NEEDS OF BEGINNING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS?

Supporting beginning special education teachers is particularly important for several reasons. The first year of teaching is an intense experience for most teachers. Beginners are expected to perform the same tasks as experienced teachers even though they inevitably lack knowledge and preparation for many aspects of their roles. How beginners cope with early demands and uncertainties may determine whether they leave in the first years of teaching, as well as the kind of teachers they become (Nemser, 1983). Given the particular need to retain teachers in special education (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, et al. 1989), supervisory personnel need to identify strategies for improving the induction process.

### General Concerns of Beginning Teachers

All teachers experience concerns about their work. Often, some of the same concerns are identified by both veteran and beginning teachers. What seems to distinguish the groups is the intensity of the concern and the amount of support that is required to foster success. Many of the concerns expressed by beginning special education teachers are also voiced by novice general education teachers. Both general and special educators identify concerns in the following areas (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992; Magliaro & Wildman, 1990; Veenman, 1984):

- Managing student behavior.
- Motivating students.
- Dealing with individual differences.
- Assessing students' instructional levels.
- Determining "what" and "how" to teach.
- Dealing with the emotional problems of individual students.
- Organizing for instruction.
- Working with parents.

- Managing time.
- Dealing with a heavy teaching load with insufficient preparation time.
- Having insufficient/inappropriate materials and resources.
- Being evaluated.

**Concerns of Beginning Special Education Teachers**

Beginning special education teachers experience additional concerns associated with their unique work situation. For example, special education teachers have reported that they have difficulty with (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992; Magliaro & Wildman, 1990)

- Understanding their roles.
- Setting realistic behavioral and academic expectations.
- Finding sufficient time to plan for individual differences.
- Writing IEPs.
- Collaborating with general classroom teachers.
- Working with paraprofessionals.
- Scheduling time with students.

Regardless of where the cause for these concerns lies -- inadequate preparation, the poor match between their preservice preparation and initial teaching assignments, unrealistic assignments, or inadequate support systems -- the reality remains that unless administrators can help relieve the pressures associated with many of these concerns, they run the risk of losing a future generation of teachers.

## 4. WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING BEGINNING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS?

Researchers and practitioners know that the first years of teaching may determine whether or not the person will stay in teaching and what type of teacher the person will become. Often, no structured support systems are available to help these beginners, so the amount and type of assistance received depends on the beginner's perceived needs, initiative, and persistence in seeking help (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992). Unfortunately, many beginners may hesitate to report problems or ask for assistance since they often have a need to be viewed as competent and able (Corcoran, 1981).

When building a support system that addresses the concerns of beginning special education teachers, administrators can approach the task from two angles. First, there are the day-to-day strategies that administrators can use to respond directly to concerns as they arise. The second type is a more long-term approach in which more formal teacher development strategies are implemented.

### Respond to Needs on a Daily Basis

The problems experienced by beginning special education teachers can be categorized as pedagogical, organizational, and special education-specific (Billingsley and Tomchin, 1992). As shown in Table 1, there are a number of ways that administrators can support novice teachers as they work through their concerns. Overall, to every extent possible, beginners' assignments need to be structured so that new teachers can spend their time as productively as possible. Beginners' job responsibilities should be carefully and deliberately planned so that they have opportunities to be successful. The most difficult assignments should be reserved for experienced teachers.

One of the most difficult tasks facing novice teachers concerns forming formal relationships with their peers. An important role of the special education teacher is to consult with general education classroom teachers. Although the basic logistics (e.g., scheduling) of collaborating can pose problems for the novice teacher, relationships can be put at risk when the novice is thrust into situations where either the general education teacher is not receptive, or where the general education teacher is a seasoned professional whose experience far surpasses that of the novice. Assessing training needs for collaboration and setting the stage so that collaboration occurs are necessary if the needs of students with disabilities are to be met.

Additionally, special education teachers may have difficulty supervising paraprofessionals. Interpersonal conflicts can occur, particularly if the aide has many years of experience and the beginner is insecure about his or her own performance. Some of these conflicts may be avoided if the beginner knows how to develop a relationship with the aide and establish expectations for the working relationship. The relationship should be enhanced if the teacher and aide agree on the functions of the aide (Frank, Keith, & Steil, 1988).

### Develop a Teacher Induction Program

The most important activity for beginners is providing effective instructional programs for their students. However, in the first year, these teachers must not only

Table 1

*Strategies for Addressing Beginning Special Education Teachers' Concerns*

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PEDAGOGICAL CONCERNS

**Instructional Needs**
- Limit the subjects beginners teach
- Provide mentors to assist in planning instruction
- Encourage teachers to reflect on teaching
- Conduct needs assessments periodically
- Provide staff development activities
- Provide information on assessing students' levels
- Provide curriculum guides/examples of lesson plans
- Allow beginners to observe other teachers
- Provide opportunities for beginners to collaborate

**Student Behavior**
- Provide resources/alternatives for behavior management
- Provide mentors to assist with behavior management
- Provide inservice on managing behaviors

**Material and Resources**
- Order materials early to assure arrival by fall
- Provide list of materials used in previous year
- Survey beginners' needs during first weeks of school
- Allow beginners to 'borrow' from other classrooms
- Outline how to obtain instructional resources
- Schedule workshops for sharing materials
- Provide opportunities for beginners to develop and evaluate instructional material

**Teacher Evaluation**
- Communicate purposes of formative and summative evaluations
- Provide opportunities to discuss evaluation systems
- Provide regular and systematic feedback to teachers

ORGANIZATION AND TIME CONCERNS

- Reduce responsibilities early in the year
- Provide additional planning days
- Provide orientation programs
- Provide clear job descriptions
- Provide calendar of IEPs and report deadlines
- Help teachers establish priorities
- Share time management/organizational tips with teachers

SPECIAL EDUCATION CONCERNS

**Mainstreaming and Collaboration**
- Assess training needs for collaboration
- Outline best practices for collaborating
- Have mentors model collaborative behaviors
- Provide time for collaborating with classroom teachers

**Individual Education Plans**
- Provide handbooks on IEP development
- Provide model IEPs
- Provide inservice on IEP development
- Prepare a video on how to develop IEPs
- Assign experienced teacher to help with IEP development

**Paraprofessionals**
- Outline paraprofessional job description
- Provide guidelines for communicating with aides
- Outline best practices and procedures for working with paraprofessionals

**Scheduling Students**
- Provide mentors to assist with scheduling
- Outline successful strategies and practices
- Provide examples of past schedules

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*Source: From "Four Beginning LD Teachers: What Their Experiences Suggest for Trainers and Employers" by B. Billingsley and E. Tomchin, 1992, Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 7, p. 111. Copyright 1992 by Springer International, (reprinted by permission).*

engage in the daily activity of teaching, they must learn to teach at the same time (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1989). Becoming an effective teacher is a complex endeavor and a support system is needed to help them in this learning process. Providing opportunities for beginners to receive feedback on their teaching and raise questions about teaching and learning should be primary goals of induction programs.

The use of peers as mentors and coaches has received a lot of attention over the last decade (Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, & Williams, 1987; Wildman et al., 1989). Peers can function as a major source of support to novices, helping the beginner grow beyond the initial stages of survival and coping. Veteran teachers can help novice teachers cope with a number of challenges, ranging from learning about the procedural demands of school to learning new teaching strategies through observing in the veteran's classroom (Shulman & Colbert, 1987). One resource for facilitating the mentoring of novice teachers is A Mentor's Resource Guide for Working with New Special Educators (Magliaro, 1991).

An organizational environment that values collaboration and professional development is key to fostering collegiality among beginners and their experienced peers. Administrators can assist in the process by sanctioning the program, both in public statements and by providing resources such as release time and formal recognition. Additionally, since the goal of such programs is to facilitate information exchanges between the beginning teacher and the mentor, beginners need to have input into the program. A responsive induction program should consider the changing needs of new teachers over time and alter the nature of the support offered to encourage teaching expertise (Odell, 1987).

### Resources for Beginning Teachers

Several handbooks are available for early career teachers. These handbooks provide teachers with important information regarding many aspects of teaching and identify specific strategies for coping with common problems. Two published handbooks that are written specifically for the special educator include: Survival Guide For the First Year Special Education Teacher (Carballo, Cohen, Danoff, Gale, Meyer, & Orton, 1990) and The Special Educator's HANDBOOK (Westling & Koorland, 1988). Another valuable resource is the Mentors' Resource Guide for Working With New Special Educators (Magliaro, 1991). Supervisory personnel may also want to develop their own orientation materials for special education teachers that includes critical information (e.g., who to contact for specific types of problems, local resources) and guidelines for the first year.

## SUMMARY

Supporting special education teachers is an important aspect of an administrator's role. Taking time to listen to teachers and show appreciation for their efforts makes a difference in how teachers feel about their work and requires few resources. However, other types of support are also needed, such as providing adequate working conditions and assisting with specific problems.

There are a number of strategies that can be used to alleviate some of the needs and concerns of both experienced and beginning teachers. Administrators who acknowledge the vital role they play in supporting special education teachers can contribute to their teachers' lives, and in so doing, enhance the lives and education of the students who they serve.

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## Chapter 14

# Educational Leadership for Teacher Collaboration

*Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend*

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the emerging approaches to delivering services to students with disabilities stress the importance of teacher collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1992; Morsink, Chase-Thomas, & Correa, 1991). At the same time, others have noted that significant challenges exist to such collaboration (Idol & West, 1991; Phillips & McCullough, 1990; Pugach & Johnson, 1990). This chapter provides administrators with basic information about the nature of teacher collaboration, its role in relation to current special education service delivery as well as other school trends, its advantages and disadvantages, and suggestions for fostering it. The information provided in this chapter does not depend on specific models for establishing programs that emphasize teacher collaboration. Rather, it is intended to act as a set of principles that can guide administrators in the design, implementation, and maintenance of models tailored to meet local needs.

The following questions will guide the discussion:

1. **What is teacher collaboration, and how does it relate to other current school practices?**
2. **How does teacher collaboration relate to special education service delivery?**
3. **What are the benefits and costs of fostering collaboration among teachers?**
4. **How can administrators plan for and implement programs and services that foster collaboration among teachers?**

## 1. WHAT IS TEACHER COLLABORATION, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO OTHER CURRENT SCHOOL PRACTICES?

### A Definition

When teachers say that they collaborate, they may mean many different things. Sometimes they may be referring to working together in a classroom to instruct a group of students that includes students with disabilities. At other times they may be describing meetings they attend to discuss students who are transferring to the school. They may also be reporting on the efforts of the school's staff development committee or any other situation in which they work closely with other teachers.

The use of the word collaboration may lead to confusion because it refers to how teachers are carrying out a specific task or activity, not the nature or purpose of the activity. Friend and Cook's (1992) definition of collaboration is intentionally general and takes this into account: "Interpersonal collaboration is a style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 5). They clarify this definition by detailing several defining characteristics. The following characteristics can be used to further describe teacher collaboration:

- *It is voluntary*. Teachers may be required to work in close proximity, but they cannot be required to collaborate. They must make a personal choice to work collaboratively in such situations. Because collaboration is voluntary, not administratively mandated, teachers often form close, but informal, collaborative partnerships with colleagues.

- *It is based on parity*. Teachers who collaborate must believe that all individuals' contributions are valued equally. The amount and nature of particular teachers' contributions may vary greatly, but the teachers recognize that what they offer is integral to the collaborative effort.

- *It requires a shared goal*. Teachers collaborate only when they share a goal. If they are working on poorly defined goals, they may be unintentionally working on different goals. When this happens, miscommunication and frustration often occur instead of collaboration.

- *It includes shared responsibility for key decisions*. Although teachers may divide their labor when engaged in collaborative activities, each one is an equal partner in making the fundamental decisions about the activities they are undertaking. This shared responsibility reinforces the sense of parity that exists among the teachers.

- *It includes shared accountability for outcomes*. This characteristic follows directly from shared responsibility. That is, if teachers share key decisions, they must also share accountability for the results of their decisions, whether those results are positive or negative.

- *It is based on shared resources*. Each teacher participating in a collaborative effort contributes some type of resource. This has the effect of increasing commitment and reinforcing each professional's sense of parity. Resources may include time, expertise, space, equipment, or any other such assets.

- *It has emergent properties*. Collaboration is based on belief in the value of shared decision making, trust, and respect among participants. However, while some degree of these elements is needed at the outset of collaborative activities, they do not have to be central characteristics of a new collaborative relationship. As teachers become more experienced with collaboration, their relationships will be characterized by the trust and respect that grow within successful collaborative relationships.

### Teacher Collaboration in Current School Practices

Many trends in schools are encouraging teacher collaboration. For example, peer coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1988) and interdisciplinary curriculum development (Brandt, 1991) are premised on teachers' collaborative relationships, as are current trends in the design and delivery of professional development programs (Barth, 1990). Many aspects of currently recommended school reforms call for greater collaboration among teachers (Goodlad, 1984). The trend toward school-based decision making is also consonant with the recognition that collaboration is becoming an essential ingredient in successful schools. Smith and Scott (1990) have asserted that the collaborative school is easier to describe than define. Such a school, they suggest, is a composite of beliefs and practices characterized by the following elements:

- The belief, based on effective schools research, that the quality of education is largely determined by what happens at the school site.

- The conviction, also supported by research findings, that instruction is most effective in a school environment characterized by norms of collegiality and continuous improvement.

- The belief that teachers are professionals who should be given the responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes.

- The use of a wide range of practices and structures that enable administrators and teachers to work together on school improvement.

- The involvement of teachers in decisions about school goals and the means for achieving them (p. 2).

Administrators often find that their discussions of collaboration focus on sharing authority with teachers and involving teachers in school decisions. While these are important aspects of school collaboration, it is teachers working together for the purpose of improving their teaching that distinguishes a truly collaborative school from a school that is simply managed in a democratic fashion. Little (1982) found that more effective schools could be differentiated from less effective schools by the degree of teacher collegiality, or collaboration, they practiced. She observed that collegiality is the existence of four specific behaviors. First, teachers talk frequently, continuously, and concretely about the practice of teaching. Second, they observe each others' teaching frequently and offer constructive feedback and critiques. Third, they work together to plan, design, evaluate, and prepare instructional materials and curriculum. Finally, they teach each other about the practice of teaching. As Cook and Friend (1991b) have noted, collaboration appears to be the unifying theme that will characterize many of the new developments in the successful schools of the 1990s.

Recognizing that collaboration refers to the professional working relationship among teachers establishes a fundamental understanding for leadership personnel who want to foster teacher collaboration. When creating structures that rely on collaboration, at least two sets of issues must be addressed. The first concerns the quality and integrity of the intervention, activity, or program that is being executed collaboratively. The second concerns the knowledge, skills, and readiness of teachers to work collaboratively. The former topic is the focus of the next section. The latter is addressed in the final section on developing collaborative structures and services.

## 2. HOW DOES TEACHER COLLABORATION RELATE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY?

Teacher collaboration as it relates to special education services should not be considered in isolation from other aspects of a collaborative school. With educational improvement for all students as the overriding goal of collaborative schools (Smith & Scott, 1990), teacher collaboration regarding students with disabilities should be just another aspect of a school's collaborative ethic and an integral part of the school culture.

### Applications of Collaborative Principles

Collaboration cannot exist by itself. It can only occur when it is associated with some program or activity that is based on the shared goals of the individuals involved. An examination of applications in which teachers work collaboratively is appropriate. Depending upon their shared programmatic goals, educators can work together in many diverse ways to deliver services to students. Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991) have described several alternative formats or configurations that facilitate collaborative efforts to deliver educational services. The following sections consider applications of collaboration that may be used for improving the delivery of educational services to all students, including those with disabilities.

*Co-Teaching*. Co-teaching is becoming a viable approach for instruction in many school situations. For example, in some high schools history and English teachers are co-teaching classes that combine their subject matter into a course called American Studies. Similarly, in middle schools, teams of teachers are meeting regularly to discuss instructional issues and to monitor student progress. Many teachers, regardless of level, contact colleagues to engage in shared classroom activities either formally or informally.

This service delivery approach is also receiving increasing attention as a means of integrating students with disabilities into general education classes. In co-teaching designed for this purpose, two teachers -- one a general education teacher and the other a special education teacher -- work primarily in a single classroom to deliver instruction to a heterogeneous group of students including students with disabilities.

Many different types of co-teaching may occur (Adams, Cessna, Stein, & Friend, 1992; Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989; Friend & Cook, 1992). The following are several common approaches:

- *One teach, one observe or assist*. In this type of co-teaching, both teachers are present, but one -- often the general education teacher -- takes a clear lead in the classroom while the other gathers observational data on students or "drifts" around the room assisting students during instruction. This approach is simple; it requires little planning on the part of the teachers, and it provides the additional assistance that can make a heterogeneous class successful. However, it also has serious liabilities. If the same teacher consistently observes or assists, that teacher may feel like a glorified aide and the students may have trouble responding to him or her as a real teacher. If this approach is followed, the teachers should alternate roles regularly.

- *Station teaching*. In this approach, the teachers divide the content to be delivered and each takes responsibility for part of it. In a classroom where station teaching is used, some of the students may be completing independent work assignments or participating in peer tutoring. Although this approach requires that the teachers share responsibility for planning sufficiently to divide the instructional content, each has separate responsibility for delivering instruction. Students benefit from the lower teacher-pupil ratio, and students with disabilities may be integrated into a group instead of being singled out. Furthermore, because with this approach each teacher instructs each part of the class, the equal status of both students and teachers is maximized. One drawback to station teaching is that the noise and activity level may be unacceptable to some teachers.

- *Parallel teaching*. The primary purpose of this type of co-teaching is to lower the student-teacher ratio. In parallel teaching, the teachers plan the instruction jointly, but each delivers it to half of the class group. This approach requires that the teachers coordinate their efforts so that the students receive essentially the same instruction. This type of co-teaching is often appropriate for drill and practice activities, projects needing close teacher supervision, and test review. As with station teaching approaches, noise and activity levels may need to be monitored.

- *Alternative teaching*. Sometimes students with special learning needs benefit from preteaching or reteaching of the instructional content. In this approach to co-teaching, one teacher works with a small group of students to preteach or reteach while the other instructs the large group. This approach can also be used to ensure that all students in a class receive opportunities to interact with a teacher in a small group. The greatest risk in this model is stigmatizing students with disabilities by repeatedly grouping them for this purpose. This risk can be avoided by varying groupings, including groups for enrichment, and ensuring that all students are periodically included in a group.

- *Team teaching*. In team teaching, both teachers share the instruction of students. The teachers may take turns leading a discussion, one may speak while the other demonstrates a concept, one may speak while the other models note taking on the chalkboard, and so on. Teachers may role play, simulate conflict, and model appropriate question asking. This approach requires the highest level of mutual trust and the most commitment. It is an approach that some co-teachers may never enjoy. On the other hand, many veteran co-teachers report that this is the type of co-teaching they find most rewarding.

Some of these approaches require close collaboration (e.g., team teaching) while others do not (e.g., one teaching while the other observes or assists). For all the approaches, Redditt (1991) has offered the following important points to keep in mind:

- All members of the school community (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents) must understand that a co-taught class is not a duplication of effort or a waste of one teacher; the two teachers are accomplishing together what neither could do alone.

- Co-teaching is not for everyone. Some teachers simply will be too uncomfortable with a colleague present in the teaching situation to perform effectively.

- Co-teachers must be both flexible and committed to the co-teaching process. For co-teaching to be successful, each teacher gives up a little and gains a great deal.

- Scheduling is one of the greatest challenges in co-teaching. Teachers not only need a shared time to teach (whether on a daily, weekly, or occasional basis), they also need time to plan instruction, especially for the models in which more coordination between the teachers is needed.

White and White (1992) have also noted that selection of students, parent notification, staff training, and program evaluation are essential components of co-teaching. They have suggested that care be taken so that individual classrooms have a manageable mix of students and that parents receive a full explanation of the goals and instructional approaches used in a co-taught class. According to White and White, teachers should have the opportunity to learn about co-teaching options prior to beginning their own efforts. Finally, schools designing co-teaching programs should systematically gather the information that will make the program accountable.

*Teams*. Another school application of collaboration is teaming. Although much of the information presented in the following paragraphs could apply to any type of team, the emphasis will be on two types in particular: prereferral teams and multidisciplinary teams.

**Prereferral Teams**. *Prereferral team* is a term used to refer to all the team approaches that address students' academic and behavior problems prior to any consideration for special education eligibility. Some teams consist of only teachers, while some include others who can assist in assessing student difficulties and supporting teachers. On all such teams, the procedures used are generally consistent with those of the prereferral intervention system proposed by Graden, Casey, and Bonstrom (1985):

- *Stage 1: Request for consultation*. In this stage the teacher requests assistance for a student, sometimes through an informal contact with an individual who functions as a consultant and sometimes through presentation of student concerns at a team meeting.

- *Stage 2: Consultation*. During this stage, strategies to address the problems raised by the student's teacher are suggested and systematically implemented. Generally, the teacher has the primary responsibility for most of the strategies.

- *Stage 3: Observation*. Feedback on the strategies being implemented is sought to determine their effectiveness; alternative strategies may also be suggested. On some teams, Stages 2 and 3 are combined.

- *Stage 4: Conference*. At this stage, the team meets to consider the information gathered. The team may decide to continue or adapt interventions, determine that a full assessment is needed, or determine that no additional intervention is warranted.

If the team recommends referral for full assessment to determine eligibility for special education, the team process is extended and involves a multidisciplinary team.

There is some debate about the membership and scope of prereferral teams. Some argue that no specialists should be on the team to avoid creating the impression that the team is just the first step in a referral to special education. Others argue that eliminating these specialists prevent the team from using their specialized expertise. Phillips and McCullough (1990; 1992) have suggested two types of members: core and auxiliary. In this approach, general educators serve on all cases and are designated as core members. Other personnel, who serve on a case-by-case basis, are identified as auxiliary members.

Another debate that occurs on teams concerns "how much is enough." On some teams, the outcomes of simple classroom modifications (e.g., calling the parents, changing the student's seat, conferring with the student) are considered an adequate basis on which to determine whether or not full assessment is needed. On other teams, interventions include systematically implemented approaches that may last several weeks. The specific ways in which teams should function can best be determined locally and in concert with local and state policies, as long as the characteristics of effective teams outlined later in this section are fostered.

**Multidisciplinary Teams**. A multidisciplinary team is the group of professionals, including teachers, that meets to determine eligibility of students for special education, decide appropriate placement, and monitor student progress. This is the type of team mandated by P.L. 94-142, (the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act of 1974), and it is the type of team on which virtually all professionals who work with students with disabilities serve.

Multidisciplinary teams by definition include the diverse professionals needed to determine a student's need for special education. Sometimes this type of team may have only a few members (e.g., school psychologist, special education teacher, classroom teacher, administrator, parent, student), but in other cases the team may also include other specialists (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, adaptive physical educator, school nurse, and/or social worker). Including all professionals related to the case on the team improves decision making (Reynolds, Gutkin, Elliott, & Witt, 1984).

A multidisciplinary team generally has three purposes. First, the team is convened to determine a student's eligibility for special education. In carrying out this purpose, team members complete assessments of the student, share their results, and jointly decide whether or not the student meets the criteria established for special services. Second, the team considers the most appropriate placement for the student. This decision must occur after the determination of eligibility and should be based on the needs of the student. The third purpose for the multidisciplinary team is to monitor the student's progress after placement in special education. Specifically,

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every 3 years the team must reassess the student and reconsider his or her special education services.

Multidisciplinary teams have probably been the most carefully scrutinized of all school teams, since this is the only type of team mandated in P.L. 94-142. Criticisms of multidisciplinary teams include lack of systematic approaches to gathering data, minimal parent and classroom teacher input, and lack of use of a systematic decision-making approach (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985; Pfeiffer, 1981).

**Fostering Collaboration on Teams**. Many professionals have offered observations on optimizing team functioning in schools (Male, 1991; Moore, Fifield, Spira, & Scarlato, 1989). Either explicitly or implicitly, their ideas suggest that effective teams are those in which collaboration is nurtured. The following are especially important characteristics of teams:

- *Team goals are clear*. Clear, explicit goals are required for collaboration, and so it is logical that precise goals are characteristic of all collaborative teams. What is difficult to convey is how essential goals are. Many teams assume they are working on the same goals when in fact some team members may have alternative goals. For example, on a prereferral team, the teacher who has brought the student to the team's attention may believe that the goal is to get the student assessed to determine eligibility for special education. The reading specialist on the team may concur with this goal. Other team members, however, may believe their goal is to help the teacher manage the student's learning difficulties without additional assessment. In this example, the referring teacher may view the team as nonresponsive while other team members may view the teacher as unwilling to try alternatives. Such goal conflicts should be articulated and resolved. If they are not, a "we" versus "they" mindset may develop.

- *Team member needs are met*. Teachers on teams should perceive that, overall, their team participation is rewarding, not frustrating, and that they are respected and valued team members. This aspect of effective teams relates to the parity characteristic of collaboration. In practice, making time to ensure that team members' needs are met can be problematic. Since teams in schools often work under severe time constraints, they are highly task focused. Sometimes, however, time is well spent on discussing team members' perceptions of the team and their role on it. Especially for teams with several new members, such sharing can foster understanding and result in greater perceived team value.

- *Team members have identified roles and responsibilities*. Just as on a sports team where all members know what positions they play and what is expected of them during a game, school team members should understand what their contribution to the team is expected to be and should be accountable for making that contribution. This aspect of teams highlights the coexistence of individual accountability for specific responsibilities and the interdependence of team functioning. By knowing their responsibilities, team members are more likely to feel obligated to carry them out (as opposed to situations in which "something" needs to be done by "someone"). At the same time, this increases their recognition that everyone else is counting on them and that the team cannot be effective without each member's contribution. This characteristic of team functioning is an application of the parity, shared decision making, and shared accountability components of collaboration. Figure 1 provides one example of a team record-keeping chart that highlights clarified responsibilities.

- *Teams have procedures that foster leadership and participation*. Nurturing parity on a team does not mean that teams function most effectively without leadership. In fact, on many struggling teams one problem is a lack of leadership. Each team needs someone to move meetings along, focus attention on the agenda, facilitate discussion, and monitor participation. This leadership role does not have to be assigned in a particular way, nor does it have to be assumed by a particular team member, but it is essential to team functioning. On most effective teams, the leadership role is shared. That is, the role of facilitator may rotate among members, and when a need arises any member is willing to take on the leadership role.

*Shared Problem Solving*. A third application of collaboration is shared problem solving. Problem solving occurs when special education teachers and classroom teachers meet with each other to address concerns about students or instruction. Problem solving may be as informal as the meeting that results when one teacher says to another, "Have you noticed that Joe is beginning to spend a lot of time daydreaming? I'd like to talk about what might be happening and bounce a few ideas around on how to handle it." It may also be a more formally established procedure that a special education and a classroom teacher go through when they meet regularly to discuss the progress of a shared student. Because problem solving is the central process teachers engage in as they interact to improve instructional practice, skills in shared problem solving may be the most critical for all teachers to acquire.

Many problem-solving models have appeared in the professional literature (Conoley & Conoley, 1982; Jayanthi & Friend, 1992; Phillips & McCullough, 1992; VanGundy, 1988). In general, most models encompass the following steps:

1. *Preparation for problem solving*. For interpersonal problem solving to be effective, participants should check with one another to be sure that they agree on the purpose of the problem solving and to confirm that they are willing to participate.

Figure 1

**Responsibility Chart for Interpersonal Problem Solving**

| Date | Task | Person(s) Responsible | Planned Completion Date | Outcomes | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

2. *Identification of the problem*. Although this step is self-explanatory, it is often mistakenly assumed to be the simplest and quickest of the problem-solving steps. It is, in fact, the most difficult to complete. Problem solvers often misidentify the primary problem, and they may not take enough time to discuss, clarify, and resolve differences in their perceptions of the problem. When this occurs, the subsequent steps are wasted in trying to solve an incorrectly identified problem.

3. *Generation of alternative solutions*. Once the problem is identified, problem solvers then generate multiple and diverse alternatives for addressing it. Although it is not the only strategy, brainstorming is often used during this step. The greatest challenge is to avoid evaluating alternatives as they are proposed, since this interferes with the production of additional alternatives.

4. *Evaluation of possible solutions*. After several options have been generated, the list should be shortened by considering the positive and negative aspects of each solution. This should also include predicting the tasks that would have to be completed to carry out each possible option. This task analysis should lead to the reduction of the list to just two or three potential alternatives.

5. *Selection of solution and detailed planning*. The final decision on a solution may be based on past experiences, available data, knowledge of the student, and/or feasibility. Once an option is selected, detailed plans should be made, with individual responsibility assigned to ensure that the solution is implemented with integrity and clarity. Also during this step, a time is set to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

6. *Evaluation of selected solution*. During this final step of the problem-solving process, problem solvers meet to determine whether or not the solution is effective and the next steps to take. If successful, the intervention may be continued or, in some cases, discontinued. Sometimes adaptations to the solution are needed to make it more effective or feasible. Occasionally, solutions are not successful and the problem solvers then decide whether to try another previously considered alternative or to begin the problem-solving process again.

Perhaps the single most important suggestion to help teachers make shared problem solving effective is to follow the steps in the process systematically. Frequently, teachers claim that they are problem solving when in actuality they are simply trying to convince each other about the "rightness" of their own ideas. Sometimes teachers generate a single idea for an identified problem and then proceed to discuss it in detail, either praising it as the only option possible or deriding it to the point that it is left out of consideration. Neither is appropriate. Implementing the problem-solving steps consumes valuable time, but time invested in systematically following the steps eliminates having to repeat the entire process later.

## 3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND COSTS OF FOSTERING COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS?

When reading about the possibilities that collaboration provides for professionals to form productive working partnerships, it is tempting to see collaboration as a panacea for a broad array of educational issues. Conversely, if administrators begin calculating the costs of collaboration in terms of staff time, they may decide it is not worth the effort before even piloting a collaborative project. As one teacher reported, "We were going to do teams to support students in our school. As we began planning, people realized how much time they would have to contribute. We quit before we even started." Clearly, the costs and benefits of collaboration are serious considerations. In this section, a sketch of typical costs and benefits is provided in the hope that it will lead to balanced decision making.

### Benefits of Collaboration for Schools

One of the most promising benefits of teacher collaboration is the increased opportunities it gives teachers to interact with one another regarding instructional issues (Barth, 1990; Idol & West, 1991). Specifically, teachers who collaborate are more likely to discuss with their colleagues areas of the curriculum they have difficulty teaching. They are also likely to obtain ideas and feedback from their peers to help solve these instructional dilemmas. As a result, teachers learn skills from one another that they can then use in their classes (Meyers, Glezheiser, & Yelich, 1991). As more school staff members participate in collaborative efforts, a ripple effect of shared knowledge and skills may spread through the school (White & White, 1992).

A related schoolwide benefit to collaboration is increased teacher sensitivity to each others' roles and responsibilities. In some schools it is common to hear professionals suggesting that their jobs are the most difficult in the school while others have less burdensome assignments. These conversations often include special education teachers. When collaboration is fostered, however, the ongoing communication tends to increase awareness that every professional in school is working diligently and that everyone has difficult tasks to do (Meyers et al., 1991). When this understanding is combined with sharing of knowledge and skills, teachers perceive that they are supported in their work (Cook, 1992).

Collaboration has a direct impact on students, too. For one thing, they receive the benefits of instruction planned by two teachers. It is quite likely that the combined efforts of the teachers are more powerful than any plans that could have been developed by a single teacher. In addition, teachers are modeling collaborative behavior for students, whether it is through co-teaching in the classroom or by participating as members of a school team. A middle school student captured the wonderful understanding that only children are capable of when he said about the team, "Oh, yeah. The teachers meet at least once a week to talk about us kids. You know, it's like L.A. Law -- those lawyers find out what's going on when they have those meetings. The teachers find out what's going on with all us kids in their meetings."

Another type of benefit accrues to students from collaboration. When teachers are working closely together, they gain perspective about student learning and behavior problems and a better understanding of which students need specialized assistance and which might benefit from more intensive interventions within general education. In fact, in many schools in which collaboration is stressed, the number of referrals to special education decreases and the proportion of students determined to be eligible for special services once assessed becomes appropriately very high.

Finally, a collaborative ethic in schools (Phillips & McCullough, 1990) is consistent with the major direction in school programming and human services, as well as societal trends in business and industry (Cook & Friend, 1991b). The emphasis on collaboration in organizations has developed to improve the quality of products and services as well as the morale and career satisfaction of the individuals within the organizations. Improved educational outcomes and increased professional retention and career satisfaction are certainly appropriate goals.

**Benefits of Collaboration for Special and General Educators**

The benefits of collaboration for schools generally hold true for the collaborative efforts among special education and general education teachers. In addition, the following positive effects may be experienced:

- Increased contact between special and general education teachers decreases their sense of isolation and improves their understanding of each others' programs and services. This understanding of each others' roles, responsibilities, and approaches helps to develop a framework upon which a collaborative ethic can be built.

- Stigmatization of students with disabilities can be reduced. Collaboration is often associated with programs in which students with disabilities spend an increased amount of time in mainstream settings. In these situtations, effective teacher collaboration helps to ensure that the special needs of a student are not highlighted unnecessarily and that the student is accommodated within the classroom context.

- Collaboration is essential when assisting students with disabilities to make the transition from a more restrictive to a less restrictive environment. For example, a student who had been receiving services in a self-contained special education class and who is going to receive services in a resource program next year will probably have fewer difficulties in the transition if teachers work closely to plan the change.

- Many students who are not eligible for special education services benefit when teachers collaborate. Depending on the approach used by the collaborating teachers, some students with special needs who are not eligible for special education services may occasionally be grouped for instruction with students with disabilities and thus benefit from specially designed instruction delivered in the general education classroom. At the very least, the knowledge and skills that special education and general education teachers learn from one another can be applied to other students.

- Program integrity for students with disabilities may be enhanced. As teachers share instructional goals, plan and deliver instruction, and jointly monitor student progress, students with disabilities may receive instruction that is less fragmented. For example, if teachers have ongoing contact, skills that might be taught outside a general education classroom can be related to those being presented in that class.

## Costs of Collaboration

If collaboration had only benefits, everyone would be participating in collaborative efforts. However, this is not occurring. Undoubtedly, the costs of collaboration are a significant consideration for educators.

If all the school districts in the country that are emphasizing collaboration were to ask teachers what the primary barrier is to teacher collaboration, the answer would be "time." Time has been highlighted in numerous reports about collaboration (e.g., Cook & Friend, 1991a; Idol & West, 1991; Redditt, 1991). In some schools, collaboration becomes so important that significant time is taken from pupil instruction. In others, the lack of adequate time leads to hasty problem solving and unsuccessful "quick fix" ideas. In yet others, the absence of time prevents teachers from employing many of the more sophisticated co-teaching approaches available. Although there is no ideal response to the problem of not having adequate time to collaborate, schools are beginning to find creative ways to make time within busy schedules. A sample of these innovative solutions to a chronic dilemma is presented in Figure 2.

A second major cost of collaboration arises from the need to prepare teachers for collaborative approaches. A dilemma many schools encounter is this: When collaboration is first discussed, perhaps in a teachers' meeting or at an Administrative Council session, professionals look at one another and say, "So? It's all just common sense." However, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly noted, "Common sense isn't." The point is, even though many teachers are intuitively skilled at working collaboratively, the demands of ongoing professional collaboration often require sophisticated skills

## Figure 2

## Ten Ways to Create Time for Collaboration

These are just a few of the ways in which schools are making time for collaboration. This list illustrates how innovative strategies can assist in solving the time dilemma.

1. Implement a peer tutoring program across two classes; students assist each other while one of the two teachers is released to work with a colleague.

2. Ask a local business to sponsor a substitute teacher for a specified number of days during the school year. Employ the substitute teacher to provide release time for teachers.

3. Work with the Parent Teacher Organization to plan and implement a "volunteer substitute teacher" program in which qualified substitute teachers donate their time to the school to release teachers.

4. When assemblies or other large-group student activities are scheduled, release a few teachers to work together. Supervision of the students for which they are responsible is managed by other staff.

5. Revise the school schedule to provide shared planning time to the teachers who most work together.

6. Initiate bi-weekly student activity periods in which community volunteers and some teachers instruct students on specialized topics while other teachers have release time to meet with colleagues.

7. Add early release days to the school calendar.

8. Have professionals in the school who do not have assigned class groups (e.g., principal, social worker, counselor) plan and deliver instructionally relevant activities while teachers have release time for planning.

9. Use at least part of any professional development days in the calendar for planning for collaboration.

10. Release teachers who have extensive responsibilities for collaboration from other school duties (e.g., lunchroom supervision).

for communication and conflict resolution that teachers may never have needed before. They may also need information on how to run efficient meetings, how to listen, and how to manage resistance. Without adequate time to develop these skills, time to discuss instructional philosophies, and so on, collaboration is unlikely to be sustained. Thus, staff preparation costs should figure significantly in decisions to promote collaboration.

A third cost of fostering collaboration is the threat it may pose for teachers who are most comfortable with an isolated approach to education (Friend & Cook, 1992). The traditional culture of schools has rewarded teachers who were satisfied with working alone and receiving few benefits and little input from others. As collaboration is considered, teachers who are comfortable with traditional schools may find collaboration frightening. They may fear that they do not have a significant contribution to make; they may be concerned that the personal cost in terms of time is too dear; or they may worry that others will be evaluating their skills (Cook & Friend, 1990). Administrators who would like to foster teacher collaboration are likely to need to devote considerable attention to this matter.

Another cost of collaboration is the possibility of increased conflict among teachers. When the adults in schools work more closely with one another, it is more likely that their differences will emerge (along with their similarities). Many teachers are uncomfortable with conflict; they may find it awkward and may prefer to avoid tackling issues instead of participating in a conflict (Friend & Cook, 1992). However, conflict could just as easily be placed on the list of benefits of collaboration, since conflict indicates that professionals are sharing real ideas with conviction.

## 4. HOW CAN ADMINISTRATORS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT FOSTER COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS?

A number of the other chapters in this text provide valuable suggestions related to program planning. The process of planning and implementing collaboration is the same or highly similar to the processes used for other types of programs. In this section, only the aspects of program planning that seem to have particular relevance to teacher collaboration are highlighted.

### Use Systematic Program Planning Steps

Programs and services that emphasize teacher collaboration are somewhat unique in that they focus attention on the *behaviors and attitudes of the adults* involved in instructing students. For that reason, they may be viewed by some teachers as threatening. It is particularly important, then, that the steps for program planning be implemented systematically. This enables all involved to feel ownership in the collaborative program and provides opportunities for them to become accustomed to the demands of collaborative programs and services. Friend and Cook (1992) have suggested the program planning steps that are outlined briefly in the list that follows. Readers are referred to this and other sources if more detailed planning information is needed (see, for example, Cook & Friend, 1990; Hall & Hord, 1987; Loucks-Horsley & Hergert, 1985).

1. *Determine goals and initial structures*. In this step, teachers should clearly identify the purpose and goals of the collaborative effort and tentatively outline the structures through which the goals could be reached. This initial step is especially critical, since the remaining planning steps are premised on mutually agreed upon goals. Although it is tempting to complete this step rapidly, administrators are well advised to proceed slowly at this juncture. The difficulties associated with problem solving when problems are poorly defined were noted earlier. The same difficulties arise when co-workers invest in planning to reach goals that are ill defined.

2. *Plan for implementation*. Once goals and structures are outlined, the next step involves planning what will be needed in order to make the program or service a reality. Often this step includes identifying resources needed for the program or service, noting all barriers that might prevent implementation (e.g., schedule conflicts, teacher reluctance, parent concerns) and generating strategies for overcoming these barriers. At the same time, this step includes listing all of the existing resources that might assist in implementing the program or service (e.g., availability of teacher minigrants for innovative projects; adoption of a new curriculum that will require teachers to work together) and how those resources might best be accessed. A final major part of this step is beginning to identify the ways in which the program or service will be evaluated.

3. *Prepare for implementation*. The purpose of this step is to begin to overcome the barriers identified and to access the resources outlined in Step 2. It also involves completing detailed plans and designing specifications for the program or service. Often, this is the point at which others perceive that the program or service is likely to be implemented. For this reason, this step often causes teachers who might not have been actively participating to become more involved. Additional barriers or resources may be noted during this phase, and they should be addressed. This step also involves many pragmatic tasks: Parents should be informed of the planned program or service; materials should be ordered if they are needed; teachers should receive initial professional development related to the collaborative effort; and specific evaluation plans should be finalized.

4. *Implement the program*. When the program or service reaches this step, it is often piloted by a volunteer group of teachers. This pilot phase enables teachers to resolve minor problems prior to widespread implementation, and it provides an opportunity for teachers who are somewhat reluctant about

the program or service to concretely observe how it operates. Evaluation data are gathered from the time that implementation begins so that needed modifications can be made.

5. *Maintain the program*. Once a program has been implemented, it is easy to assume that it will immediately become self-sustaining. This is particularly true when participants have contributed a tremendous amount of time and effort to make the program or service successful, implementation seems to be occurring with few problems, and other projects and priorities are beginning to compete for everyone's attention. Even successful programs should be monitored and periodically assessed to determine their status. For example, teachers who are new to the school should be provided with information about the program. In addition, program results should be examined, and parents should regularly be asked for their input.

The steps just outlined may seem very detailed, and some readers may question their necessity. However, experience has repeatedly demonstrated that it is well worth the effort to follow these steps carefully when planning a program or service that emphasizes collaboration. If this is done, the program reaches full implementation far more rapidly and smoothly than if the steps had not been followed. Conversely, when steps are not completed, we have found that either the project is abandoned before full implementation is reached or enormous amounts of time are required to resolve problems that could have been avoided.

### Distinguish the Program or Service from the Collaborative Requirement

In the beginning of this chapter it was stressed that collaboration is *how* adults work together, whereas a program or service is *what* they are doing. This is mentioned again as a program planning topic because it is a critical concept. Teachers need to plan what the program or service will look like (e.g., a peer tutoring program, a co-teaching service, a weekly team meeting), but they also need to prepare for the requirement of working together (Gable, Friend, Laycock, & Hendrickson, 1990).

### Use Effective Leadership Strategies to Foster Participation

One of the most frequent observations made by those working with groups of teachers to design, implement, or evaluate collaborative programs or services concurs with Barth's (1984) position that administrators need to both model desirable traits and to foster and encourage those behaviors in others. The following are examples of ways in which this can be done:

- *Provide incentives to participating teachers*. Arrange for substitute teachers so that the participants can be released for planning or evaluation activities. Encourage participants to attend professional meetings, and to find "seed money" that participants can use to purchase materials or other needed supplies. On the other hand, access to such resources should be restricted for teachers who refuse to participate.

- *Help teachers set priorities*. In many schools, teachers feel inundated by change. They feel that no sooner do they begin to implement one new program or service than someone insists that they begin another. As a result, many teachers feel as though they are being pulled apart. Teachers need to be involved in the decision making regarding implementing new programs and services, and sometimes the best answer to yet another innovative idea is a polite "No."

- *Set a standard, but allow teachers to grow toward it*. Even though collaboration is voluntary, it can be a standard for programs in a school. Teachers need to know if this is the expectation so that they can learn about it and refine their skills for it. If collaboration is the standard, after a period of time it should be expected of all teachers and should be reflected in their performance reviews. Teachers who do not want to work collaboratively should not be considered to be performing their professional responsibilities adequately, and new teachers should be explicitly notified that collaboration is part of the school culture that is reflected in their performance evaluations.

- *Provide professional development opportunities*. One strategy for making it clear that collaboration is a standard is to provide opportunities for teachers to learn about collaboration and practice the skills that facilitate collaborative working relationships. Teachers repeatedly comment that they have not been prepared to interact with colleagues on an ongoing basis. Even teachers who have worked on collaborative projects for a lengthy period of time note how valuable it is to refresh their knowledge of the requirements of collaboration and practice the related skills.

- *Be present*. Administrators should be actively involved in the planning and implementation of collaborative programs and services. In this way they provide a model for collaboration (Barth, 1984). They enact it by joining with teachers and others to improve school conditions. This enables them to be knowledgeable about the projects and informed about potential barriers and opportunities.

- *Seek and value a wide range of input*. For collaborative programs and services to succeed in the long run, the input of all stakeholders is needed. These stakeholders include not only those who initially support the proposal, but also those who question its value. Supporters and opponents both make contributions that are important in program planning and implementation (Cook & Friend, 1990).

## SUMMARY

Collaboration is an exciting vehicle through which teachers can plan and carry out an array of services for students with disabilities as well as for other students. Establishing a strong collaborative ethic in a school has the additional benefit of enhancing teacher morale and providing teachers with a support network. However, fostering collaboration requires patience and careful attention to many details. By managing it carefully, administrators can ensure that collaboration becomes a foundation for their school communities.

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## Chapter 15

# Evaluating Teachers and Support Personnel

*James H. Stronge*

## INTRODUCTION

A conceptually sound and properly implemented evaluation system for special education and related services personnel is a vital component of an effective special education program. Regardless of how well a special education program may be designed, the program is only as effective as the people who implement and support it. Thus, a rational relationship exists between personnel and programs: Effective personnel ensure effective programs. If program effectiveness is important and if personnel are necessary for effective programming, then a conceptually sound and properly implemented evaluation system for special education personnel is essential.

Despite the fact that proper evaluation of special education personnel is fundamental, this part of the personnel process is too frequently neglected. Personnel evaluations in education historically have focused primarily on classroom teachers and, in more recent years, on administrators. Regardless of the position and responsibilities specific to the position, evaluation needs are basic: the need for a fair, comprehensive evaluation based on performance and designed to encourage improvement in both the person being evaluated and the school. Unfortunately, the evaluation of special education personnel, especially those who utilize highly specialized instructional practices and training, all too often has been conducted inappropriately, if at all.

The evaluation of special educators, as well as other support personnel, is unique (Katims & Henderson, 1990; Proctor & Lamkin, 1987; Warger & Aldinger, 1987), and it deserves special attention if evaluations are to be valid and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the special education initiative. This chapter explores the important issue of evaluation for special education personnel addressing the aspects of the process that make it unique. Specifically, the following five questions are used as a framework for this exploration:

1. **What are the fundamental purposes of personnel evaluation?**
2. **Why is evaluation of special education and related services personnel unique?**
3. **What are the steps in a sound evaluation model for special education personnel?**

4. **How should the evaluation system be implemented?**

5. **What constitutes a legally defensible personnel evaluation system?**

## 1. WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES OF PERSONNEL EVALUATION?

A comprehensive personnel evaluation system should be rooted in the following two broad purposes:

- It should be _outcome oriented_, contributing to the personal goals of the individual and to the mission of the program, the school, and the total educational organization (i.e., it should have a summative focus).

- It should be _improvement oriented_, contributing to the personal and professional development needs of the individual as well as improvement within the organization (i.e., it should have a formative focus).

These two primary purposes of evaluation can be viewed as interrelated and synergistic. Striving for goal accomplishment (assuming that the goals are valuable) will focus the energy of the individual and thus facilitate performance and improvement in the organization. Conversely, improvement in individual performance will facilitate both individual and institutional goal accomplishment.

### Outcome Orientation

Unity of purpose is a hallmark of an effective school. Indeed, schoolwide or systemwide purposes should form the basis for all organizational action. In tying organizational purposes to evaluation, Castetter (1981) stated that "a performance appraisal system has its genesis in the broad purposes of the organization (p. 39)." "The importance of establishing organizational goals and having the total personnel function, including evaluation, revolve around the goals" should be obvious in a sound evaluation system (Stronge & Helm, 1991, p. 78). The evaluation system should facilitate not only institutional goal accomplishment but also compatibility with and support for individual goals. Additionally, if goal accomplishment (both institutional and individual) is fundamental to success, then the evaluation system should reflect this orientation (Stronge & Helm, 1992).

### Improvement Orientation

While an evaluation system should be goal focused, it also should be improvement oriented. Goals typically reflect a desired state of being, not an existing state. Therefore, if established goals (for both the individual and institution) are to be achieved, an emphasis on improvement and monitoring of progress toward goal accomplishment is inherent in a sound evaluation system (Stronge & Helm, 1992).

Stufflebeam (1983) captured this emphasis in evaluation when he wrote that the purpose of evaluation is "not to prove but to improve" (p. 117). Improvement can take numerous forms, including

- Improvement in performance of individual teachers, administrators, and support personnel.
- Improvement of programs and services to students, parents, and community.
- Improvement of the school's ability to accomplish its mission.

## 2. WHY IS EVALUATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL UNIQUE?

There are three basic factors that at least partially explain why evaluating special education personnel is unique:

- The erosion of traditional unity of command in education.
- The inclusion of multiple special education positions reflecting highly specialized practices and training.
- The need for multifaceted data collection in the evaluation of special education personnel.

### Unity of Command

American education has a long history of control based on the classical administrative principle of unity of command. Adapted from the work of Henri Fayol and others, the operation of unitary command structures in schools has meant that every employee has had one immediate supervisor, and formal communications and evaluations within the organization have occurred within the linear chain of command (e.g., superintendent to principal to teacher). This principle is codified in virtually all contemporary schools in the form of the organization chart, resulting in a simplified, albeit bureaucratic, decision structure.

However, unity of command has begun to erode in recent years in favor of more complex and collaborative evaluation and decision-making processes, especially relating to special education personnel. With the advent of Public Law 94-142 and its continued support and expansion under Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the number of itinerant teachers and support personnel has proliferated. These itinerant personnel, while part of a school's staff, are shared with other schools. They are here today and gone tomorrow and, under such an amorphous work schedule, fall outside the normal control loop of the school. Problems related to this change in organizational structure are especially acute when it comes to evaluation. Who is responsible for monitoring performance and conducting the evaluation? Is it the principal in School A or School B? Or is it both? Or is evaluation now charged to someone entirely outside the schools, the special education director? Under any one of these or a combination of other evaluative scenarios, one point is clear: Evaluating many special education staff in contemporary educational settings can be especially complex.

### Multiple Special Education Positions

Special education is an umbrella term used to describe educational and related services that are provided to a wide array of students with special needs. By the very nature of special education, it encompasses a multiplicity of highly specialized personnel. For example, within the ranks of special education teachers, a given school may have teachers for students with specific learning disabilities, visual impairments, mental disabilities, and other disabilities. How does a principal competently evaluate these teachers for effectiveness in teaching process and content? Additionally, how does the principal evaluate the related service personnel -- speech pathologists, hearing interpreters, physical therapists -- who may be part of the special education program (Stronge & Helm, 1990)? "Very uneasily," could be the answer, reflecting the discomfort experienced by both the specialist being evaluated and the evaluation generalist, who not only wants to be competent in personnel evaluation but also is increasingly held accountable for the performance evaluation he or she conducts (Butram & Wilson, 1987; Knox, 1982).

### Multifaceted Data Collection

The most common mode for evaluating regular education teachers is a clinical supervision model consisting of preconference, observation, and postconference. However, primary reliance on formal observations in evaluation is problematic in general (e.g., artificiality, small sample of performance) and its value is even more limited for evaluating many special education personnel. For example, what value would be gained by observing an audiologist at work? Would it not be a more appropriate procedure to collect data from a variety of sources and incorporate the data in an evaluation that reflects a clearer and more comprehensive picture of performance?

An evaluation system that relies on multifaceted data collection and analysis will be appreciated by those who are reluctant to rely too heavily on formal observations, especially the planned observations that are used so much more frequently than spontaneous observations.[1] After all, teachers make special preparations for a planned observation. Any observer changes the environment being observed by his or her presence, which further contributes to the artificiality of formal classroom observation as a means of assessing teacher performance.

As the measurement of instructional skills and behavior replaces the description of personal and interpersonal dynamics, the need for collection of performance data from multiple sources increases. In addition to observation, seeking input from client groups (i.e., parents, students) and other special education personnel, combined with assessment of job artifacts (such as individualized education programs, diagnostic reports, behavior management procedures, record keeping, and lesson plans), provides important documentation for the evaluation of a special educator's overall professional performance (Stronge & Helm, 1992). It also serves as a model for evaluation of other support personnel.

## 3. WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN A SOUND EVALUATION MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL?

A comprehensive personnel evaluation model will rationally relate individual performance to the organization's goals, identify the individual's intended performance, accurately document performance, and, based on documented performance, fairly evaluate the individual's performance. A variety of evaluation systems could be applied to special education personnel. For the purposes of this chapter, the Professional Support Personnel evaluation model developed by Stronge and Helm (1991) -- a model that is readily adaptable to special education teachers and support personnel -- will be presented. This evaluation model provides a fair evaluation based on performance and yet is flexible enough to address the multifaceted job responsibilities of special education personnel.

The model reflects six distinct steps in the evaluation process: (1) identify system needs; (2) relate program expectations to job responsibilities; (3) select performance indicators; (4) set standards for job performance; (5) document job performance; and (6) evaluate performance. The following are brief descriptions of these steps as represented in Figure 1.

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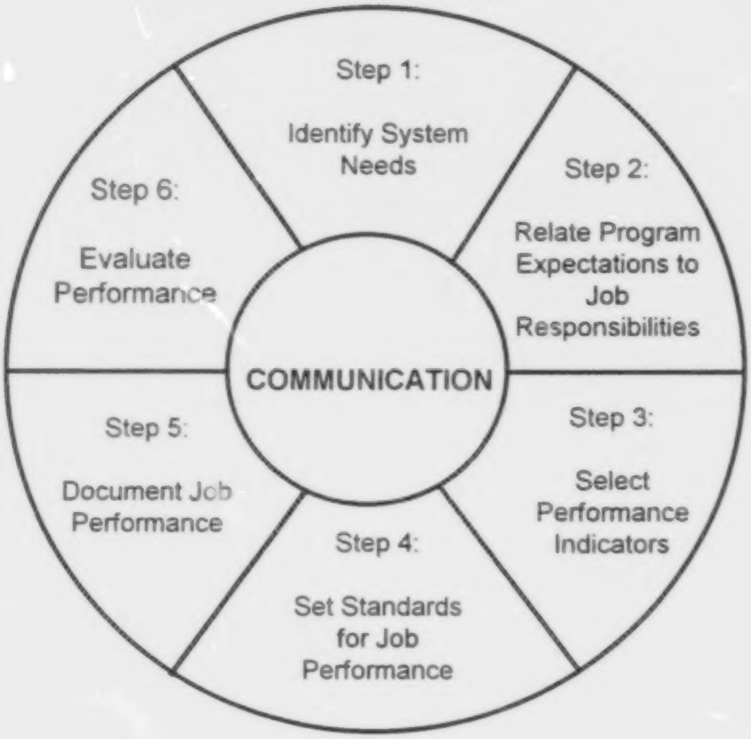
[1] An example of an objective and comprehensive evaluation tool is the Scales for Effective Teaching developed by Kukic, S.; Fister, S.; Link, D.; and Freston, J. The tool defines the task of teaching using 15 scales that include instructional competencies such as "learning outcomes" and "academic learning/engaged time" as well as general professional competencies such as "teamwork" and "organizational commitment." This instrument provides a behaviorally based means for assessing broader professional expectations that are particularly appropriate for special educators and some support personnel due to their more varied job descriptions and greater contact with parents and other specialists. A model such as this informs professionals of the criteria, standards, and procedures for evaluation before implementation and provides greater objectivity in the process.

FIGURE 1

## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Model


Step 1:
Identify System Needs
Step 2:
Relate Program Expectations to Job Responsibilities
Step 3:
Select Performance Indicators
Step 4:
Set Standards for Job Performance
Step 5:
Document Job Performance
Step 6:
Evaluate Performance
COMMUNICATION

*Source: Stronge and Helm (1991).*

### Step 1: Identify System Needs

Each educational organization has specific needs that are related to the organization's mission and are met through various special education and support personnel positions. A systematic examination of the needs of the organization's constituents will help clarify its mission and purpose. Determining the needs of the organization, and specifically the special education division, is a prerequisite for all remaining steps if the evaluation process is to be relevant to the organization's mission.

### Step 2: Relate Program Expectations to Job Responsibilities

Accurate and appropriate descriptions of job responsibilities can be developed only from clear statements of special education program goals and expectations that reflect organizational goals and philosophies. The development of job responsibilities should be conducted jointly between the central office staff responsible for special education and appropriate principals.

### Step 3: Select Performance Indicators

Because job performance must be reflected in behavior in order to be evaluated, this step involves the identification and selection of behaviors that are reflective of the previously identified job responsibilities. While job responsibilities are intended to capture the essence of the job, it is difficult, if not impossible, to document the fulfillment of the job responsibilities without some measurable indication of their accomplishment. Thus, to give meaning to these broader job responsibilities, it becomes necessary to select performance indicators that are both measurable and indicative of the job. Selection of specific performance indicators may vary year by year and school by school based on specific task assignments. Therefore, this step should involve input from both the central office staff and the principal(s) to whom the person is assigned.

### Step 4: Set Standards for Job Performance

Setting standards involves determining a level of acceptable performance. Because of program needs, available resources, the purpose of a specific position, and a variety of other factors, standards of performance will vary from position to position and from organization to organization. The evaluation system offers a method of setting standards rather than attempting to prescribe specific standards of performance. This is an important step in this or any goals-oriented evaluation system that should be addressed by both the administrator-evaluator and the special education employee.

### Step 5: Document Job Performance

Documentation is the process of recording sufficient information about job performance to support ongoing evaluation of the special education staff member and to justify any personnel decisions based on the evaluation. Documentation procedures rely on multifaceted data collection techniques including observation, questioning, and analysis of artifacts of performance.

### Step 6: Evaluate Performance

Evaluation is the process of comparing an individual's documented job performance with the previously established performance standards. This process can begin with both the evaluator and the special education employee conducting separate, preliminary evaluations prior to the evaluation conference. The employee will collect and analyze his or her documentation and any contextual factors affecting performance. The conference itself is an occasion for candid communication between supervisor and employee. Identification of discrepancies between standards and performance and discussions of reasons for those discrepancies is the primary but not the sole focus of the conversation. Emphasis on areas for improvement or on new objectives will vary, depending on the stage of the evaluation process (i.e., whether the current evaluation is formative or summative) (Stronge & Helm, 1991).

## 4. HOW SHOULD THE EVALUATION SYSTEM BE IMPLEMENTED?

Implementing a sound personnel evaluation system is a comprehensive and complex undertaking, and discussion of all facets of implementing such a system cannot be incorporated into the few pages of this chapter. Indeed, any personnel evaluation system should properly address the standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988): propriety, utility, feasibility, and accuracy. However, a brief review of four of the more practical questions that face the administrator or evaluator in implementing an evaluation system appropriate for special education personnel can be provided here. The questions are as follows:

- How can flexible descriptions of job responsibilities that meet the needs of both the special education program and the specific school assignment(s) be developed?
- How should performance be documented?
- What evaluation forms can be used?
- What should be the focus of the evaluation conference?

## Developing Job Responsibilities

One factor that makes the evaluation of special education personnel unique is the lack of a single supervisor determining job responsibilities and expectations (due to work responsibilities in multiple schools with supervision conducted by multiple administrators). Thus, when special education personnel are evaluated by only one of the administrators they work for, evaluations are often limited in scope and may not capture the whole spectrum of job requirements.

Another problem plaguing the proper development of job responsibilities and their subsequent evaluation is the lack of administrators with appropriate training to manage special education programs -- a problem that is especially acute in rural areas (Hutto & Page, 1991). To provide a more comprehensive and fair evaluation, one recommended method is a collaborative process involving the central office staff responsible for special education and building-level principals. Another solution, suggested by Hutto and Page (1991), would be to establish a collaborative administrative team of educators, parents, and community members. When collaborative arrangements such as this are established, special education program expectations can be translated more effectively into job responsibilities with appropriate performance indicators and standards for job performance.[2] This process clearly requires input from the person who determines programmatic direction, the director of special education in most cases, and the building-level administrator who will be responsible for supervising daily performance of job expectations. Only through a joint process of defining responsibilities and standards of performance can there be clear direction for the program, the evaluation process, and the person being evaluated.

## Documenting Performance

Although classroom teacher evaluation has relied almost exclusively on observation as a source of documentation, the evaluation of special education personnel cannot and should not rely on observation alone for obtaining evidence of performance effectiveness. Rather, the system recommended here builds upon

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[2] Lists of competencies applicable for special education personnel can be found in the following:

1. Stronge, J. H., & Helm, V. M., in Evaluating Professional Support Personnel in Education, provide examples for counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and school nurses.
2. Knox, S. C., in Staff Development Needs in Special Education: A Minnesota Study, provides a list of staff development items that can be used as a competency list for numerous special education personnel.
3. Hill, D., in A Content Analysis of Special Education Teacher Evaluation Forms, provides a compiled list of competencies found in special education teacher evaluation forms from 132 school systems.

(Please see the reference list for full citations.)

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multiple sources of performance evidence including self-assessment, observation, questioning, and analysis of artifacts. This system more accurately reflects the multifaceted job requirements of special education personnel that go far beyond basic instruction and, in the case of many support professionals, may not include any instruction.

Documenting job performance should also be seen as a collaborative process with input from all the supervisors working with a particular professional, such as principals from various schools or central office staff. However, time constraints and clarity of message are best served by assigning a single evaluator for each special education teacher or support professional. This evaluator is responsible for collecting feedback from other supervisors and synthesizing the information for use in the supervisory process outlined previously. Specific evaluation assignments can be made to balance supervision loads and reflect the expertise of supervisors. For example, building-level goals or concerns might suggest evaluation of a professional by a particular principal, but if technical goals or concerns are the focus of the evaluation, the professional might require evaluation by a central office specialist.

*Self-Assessment*. For purposes of professional growth, self-assessment can be defined as making judgments about one's own job performance. The purposes of self-assessment are to encourage the employee to analyze his or her current performance; provide information for a progress review conference; and assist in the identification of strengths, weaknesses, and avenues for improving performance.

Self-assessment can provide a preliminary, candid evaluation that the employee may use to determine areas in which improvement is needed. It should be noted that many studies of self-evaluation have revealed that individual educators (as well as other employees) tend to perceive their performance a bit more generously than do their students or other clients. With a basis for comparing his or her perceptions with those of others and interpreting any differences revealed by the comparison, an employee would be best prepared if she or he spent time assessing major accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses, reasons for disappointing results, and proposed changes in goals or objectives for the rest of the appraisal period or for the next one (Stronge & Helm, 1991).

*Observation*. Special education personnel, especially support personnel, spend much of their time engaged in activities that would be inefficient to observe (e.g., a speech pathologist conducting a screening test) or are in violation of professionally and legally required confidentiality (e.g., a social worker or counselor discussing a student's home situation). Despite the inherent and substantial limitations of observations for evaluating some special education personnel, they can play a meaningful role in the data collection process.

There are two basic types of observations: systematic and incidental. As an example of systematic observation, the evaluator conducts a semistructured, planned observation of an employee who is tutoring individual students or presenting a program to staff. For positions where lesson or program presentations reflect planning and use of professional knowledge and skills, such observation has substantial validity as a means of documenting job performance. Systematic observation might also involve the observation of office routine or of time management skills.

Incidental observation is less direct and structured. It might include, for example, the employee's participation in faculty meetings, with the evaluator being alert to evidence of contributions to the discussion, articulate expression of ideas, insightfulness, ability to relate to other staff in the meeting, and so forth. An important point to remember when compiling incidental observation data is to focus on specific, factual descriptions of behavior, events, or statements.

*Questioning*. Asking those with whom an employee works about their perceptions of that employee's effectiveness (e.g., surveying parents regarding a professional's communication skills) can constitute an important source of documentation for special education personnel. This is particularly true in view of the fact that data collection through traditional observational channels is limited; it reflects only direct student interaction and not other professional parameters such as communication skills or consultation effectiveness. The most complete picture of an employee's performance will be obtained by questioning at least a representative sampling from all of the various constituencies with whom the employee works. This can be done most efficiently by developing a questionnaire jointly with the professional so that both personal and institutional goals can be assessed. This process can allow for input from subordinates, peers, supervisors, clients, and, in some instances, students.

*Artifacts of Performance*. Another important source for obtaining documentation of performance is analysis of artifacts (i.e., the collection of written records and documents produced by the employee as a part of his or her job responsibilities). Artifacts for a special education teacher, for example, might include copies of IEPs developed, lesson plans related to those IEPs, syllabi developed or adapted for a given class, and representative samples of student work. Additional artifacts that are likely to accurately reflect job performance include the following:

- Reports generated and written.
- Diagnostic evaluations.
- Forms developed and/or used for record keeping.
- Significant correspondence and memos.
- Program plans.
- Survey instruments developed to obtain needed information.

- Schedules, logs, or calendars of activities.
- Materials created for instruction or presentation.

## Evaluation Forms

A thorough review of the literature (Moya & Gay, 1982) revealed that there are few published evaluation instruments for special educators or support personnel. Most school districts have not established distinct guidelines for the evaluation of special education personnel. Thus, it is necessary to either develop models or adapt existing ones to meet the needs of special education personnel.

Although the availability of specialized evaluation forms would seemingly simplify the task at hand, a generic form such as the one presented here offers greater flexibility for the evaluator in adapting the specifics of the evaluation to more accurately reflect the job responsibilities for a wide range of personnel. A generic approach also allows special education personnel to be evaluated using procedures that are consistent with those for other staff and thus, more practical for use.

Appendix A depicts an evaluation instrument that can be adapted to fit special education teachers and support personnel. Consistent with the steps included in the evaluation model presented earlier in this chapter, this instrument identifies areas of responsibility, job responsibilities within each area, and performance indicators related to each job responsibility. Additionally, the instrument provides identifying information, standards for satisfactory performance, documentation of performance (method and documented performance, rating of each job responsibility), and summary information (commendations, recommendations for improvement, comments, signatures of evaluator and evaluatee, and dates). To clarify its potential use, Appendices B, C, and D depict use of the instrument in the evaluation of selected job responsibilities of special education personnel: a counselor working with parents, a special education resource/consulting teacher working with regular education teachers, and a speech and language therapist working with student referrals.

## The Evaluation Conference

*Purposes*. Recognizing that the overarching purpose of evaluation in education is the assessment of performance in order to ensure the delivery of the best quality programs to students, it is natural to view the evaluation conference as a vehicle for enhancing job performance. The evaluation conference should be viewed as an effective vehicle for communication both in the interim formative evaluation and in the final summative evaluation. The evaluation conference should provide the occasion for candid assessment of past behaviors as they have contributed to current goal achievement and for development or revisions of a plan for continuing improvement of performance.

An effective evaluation conference will achieve a number of specific purposes such as the following (Redfern, 1980):

- Discussion of goals and objectives.
- Candid and complete assessment of the employee's job performance.
- Recognition for good work.
- Communication concerning suggestions for improvement.
- Clarification of responsibilities.
- Professional growth.
- Record for assessment of the educational program as a whole.

*Planning for the Evaluation Conference*. The success of any evaluation conference depends on preparation. Planning for the conference is essential for the administrator. Preparation begins with the administrator (or other evaluator) setting a tentative time for the conference and checking with the special education employee for any scheduling conflicts. Management experts suggest scheduling evaluation conferences for mid-morning, after the start-up routine is completed but before both the administrator and the employee are too tired or distracted. Additionally, they discourage scheduling an evaluation conference on a Friday, when the evaluatee has the entire weekend to brood about any critical observations (Alexander Hamilton Institute, 1989). The evaluator should (but only tentatively) complete the appraisal form designated by the evaluation procedures. She or he should have a clear idea of the employee's strengths and weaknesses and accomplishments and failures in relation to the objectives previously established. Where there are performance deficiencies, it is crucial to be prepared to articulate clearly the nature of the deficiencies and some specific examples of behaviors or outcomes in which those deficiencies are exhibited. Furthermore, it is essential for the evaluator to prepare specific suggestions for improvement.

*Conducting the Evaluation Conference*. When the employee arrives for the evaluation conference, the evaluator should create a comfortable atmosphere. He or she should either review or ask the evaluatee to briefly review performance objectives and the performance indicators that reveal to what extent objectives have been obtained. Allowing evaluatees to cite their own less than satisfactory performances or failures to achieve certain objectives -- defuses some of the emotional content of the conference; it also reduces the natural defensiveness that renders most people unreceptive to suggestions for improvement. Typically, the less the evaluator talks and the more the evaluatee talks, the more useful the conference is likely to be. Employees are more accepting of having their shortcomings pointed out and more receptive to suggestions for improvement when they have had a major role in identifying those shortcomings or suggestions for improvement. If both the evaluator and the employee agree that some improvements are in order, the focus in the conference begins to shift from past to future performance. Together, they may develop goals and objectives for the next appraisal period. When dealing with an employee whose performance is less than desirable, the discussion will be more productive if the evaluator limits criticism to descriptions of specific behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors. When changes are needed to improve performance, emphasizing the correction rather than the fault is effective.

An evaluation conference should allow the evaluatee to do much of the assessing, analyzing, and setting of new goals, with the evaluator responding, comparing, and guiding the discussion. Both parties should have a clear conception of the assessment being made by the evaluator. When the formal evaluation is completed, the evaluatee should see and sign one copy, and, if protocol calls for it, retain one copy for his or her personal files. Signatures are usually understood to indicate that the person has seen, rather than necessarily agreed with, the evaluation and has been given an opportunity to attach an addendum (Stronge & Helm, 1991).

## 5. WHAT CONSTITUTES A LEGALLY DEFENSIBLE PERSONNEL EVALUATION SYSTEM?

The legal ramifications of evaluation are a concern for many principals and other administrators who serve as personnel evaluators. For example, any negative evaluation might render them vulnerable to future legal actions based on charges such as defamation of character or denial of due process. In response to this concern, one of the most fundamental points for an evaluator to recognize is that theoretically and conceptually sound evaluation practices coincide with legally sound evaluation procedures. The congruence of the perspectives of theory, practice, and law derives from two concerns that are at the heart of each: integrity and fairness. Due to the complexity of conducting appropriate evaluations of special education personnel, issues of fairness and integrity are particularly germane. In addition, special education personnel are involved in legally mandated and prescribed work. They are sensitive to legal issues and may therefore be held more accountable for their actions due to the legal implications for the entire school system.

The following discussion focuses on developing and implementing legally sound and fair evaluation practices.[3] Specifically, a brief description of due process as applied to personnel evaluation and a set of legally defensible guidelines for evaluation are presented.

### Due Process in Evaluation

Due process is essentially the fairness required by the Fourteenth Amendment of government officials whose actions might deprive individuals of life, liberty, or property.

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[3] The suggestions provided in this section were adapted from the work of Helm found in J. H. Stronge, (1988). Evaluation of Ancillary School Personnel Training Module. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education.

What constitutes fairness? Decades of case law have produced an understanding of fairness as action that is not arbitrary, unreasonable, discriminatory, or based on vague rules or procedures. All tenured educators have a property interest (i.e., a legitimate expectation of continued employment in their jobs) giving them the right to substantial due process. Moreover, educators who have not obtained tenure have a property interest for the duration of their contracts.

One of the more complex aspects of the concept of due process is the distinction between *procedural* and *substantive* due process. Essentially, the distinction is one of means and ends. The means (procedures) must themselves be fair in providing notice and opportunity for responding; the end (final action) must be reasonable and justifiable based on the evidence available. Due process has come to imply that professional public school personnel, including special education personnel, are entitled to

- Notification of the expected standards of performance.
- The criteria and procedures of evaluation.
- A reasonable timeframe for evaluation.
- Adequate notice of evaluation results.
- Clear directions for improvement.
- A reasonable time to improve.
- Reasonable help in improving.
- Evaluations containing substantial evidence for employment decisions.

These general guidelines are described more specifically in the Virginia School Code, Chapter 15, Article 3 (§ 22.1-306 - 22.1-314), which mandates requirements reflecting both substantive and procedural due process in personnel decisions.

## Guidelines for Evaluation

The following seven guidelines will assist in developing evaluation procedures that promote the development of the highest quality evaluation system for both formative and summative evaluation of special education teachers and support personnel.

*Guideline 1*: Inform special educators of all standards, criteria, and procedures for evaluation before implementation. It is not only unfair; it is denial of due process to impose standards or procedures after the evaluation process has begun -- or worse, after it has been completed. Prior notice enables special educators to know the rules of the game: who will evaluate what and when, as well as by what standards and with what consequence.

*Guideline No. 2*: Adhere strictly to all state and local (statutory and administrative) procedural requirements. The more closely evaluators adhere to each requirement, the more appropriate is implementation of the evaluation process and outcome. Although case law has produced conflicting results, failure to comply with any specified deadlines or procedures can invalidate the entire evaluation process. Some courts have invalidated for the slightest procedural error; others have considered the total record and, if they found evidence for a good faith effort, have tolerated slight deviations that otherwise would not affect the outcome of the evaluation process. However, the only safe course of action is to adhere to all prescribed procedures.

*Guideline No. 3*: The evaluation system must provide objectivity in the process. Objectivity is one of the most crucial components of any evaluation process. Its presence protects all educators from politically or personally questionable, ulterior motives by the evaluator(s) -- including motives that reflect discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, or any other category irrelevant to job performance.

Discrimination charges may be based on either the standards for evaluation or the implementation of the evaluation process itself. Such charges may be brought under the Constitution, federal legislation (i.e., Title VII or Title IX), or applicable state statutes. It should be noted that United States Supreme Court rulings have focused primarily on violations occurring in hiring decisions rather than specifically in evaluation. However, the principles established can reasonably be expected to apply in evaluation procedures. Treating people differently or unfairly without a rational, justifiable occupational reason will not withstand judicial scrutiny.

*Guideline No. 4*: Evaluation should document patterns and effects of behavior. Case law contains a number of examples of administrators who conducted one-time evaluations and made decisions to terminate teachers on the basis of a single, isolated incident. Unless the findings from this one-shot evaluation are particularly egregious, these decisions all too frequently do not hold up in court. A much better approach is to document patterns of performance and the consequent effects of the performance.

The importance of documentation can readily be recognized in documenting personnel performance. Proper documentation consists of

- Patterns of repeated behaviors.
- The adverse effects of those behaviors on students and/or the school environment.
- The efforts made by the administrator to help with the problems or the lack of effort or improvement made by the educator.

One way to establish patterns of behavior is to conduct evaluations more, rather than less, frequently. Frequent evaluations can also enhance the perceived objectivity of the evaluation process and outcome.

*Guideline No. 5*: Determine whether or not the special educator's behavior is remediable. Irremediable behavior has been defined by case law as behavior that has a seriously damaging effect on students or the school community *or* that could not have been corrected even with prior warning. Generally, teaching or professionally related behavior on the job is remediable. Only the more extreme personal behavior, whether on or off the job, is irremediable.

*Guideline No. 6*: When remediable deficiencies are cited, provide clear descriptions of the deficiencies and clear, specific descriptions of the expected corrections or improvements in performance or behavior. Deficiencies described as "poor relationships with students" or "poor discipline" in the absence of specific examples have been judged vague, ambiguous, and incapable of placing the teacher on notice of the specific conduct prescribed. Similarly, general criticisms have been rejected by courts, which found that these citations did not show what improvements were needed. Additionally, courts have implied the need for clear statements of the standards of performance that would provide evidence of correction or remediation of the educator's deficiencies.

*Guideline No. 7*: Provide proper assistance to the special educator in need of remediation. What kinds of activities or experiences should be incorporated into a remediation plan that will provide maximum benefit to the educator? From case law and from evaluation theory, the following activities and experiences are suggested:

- The qualified administrator and any other district supervisory personnel with specialization in the area(s) of the professional's responsibilities may make suggestions.
- The special educator may be required to be observed by one or more specialists.
- The special educator may be required to enroll in courses, workshops, or seminars designed to provide the knowledge or skills she or he needs to improve to a satisfactory level.
- The special educator may be required to videotape his or her performance and view the tapes.
- The special educator may be required to read appropriate references or resources.
- A consulting teacher who is not only qualified but also willing and supportive may be assigned to assist the special educator.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has addressed the issue of evaluating special education personnel in a manner that will ensure fairness to the individual educator as well as to the school. The focus of all evaluations, including those that have a summative element, should be on improvement. Evaluation is merely a means to an end. Improving individual performance in order to provide high-quality services and programs to students is the ultimate purpose of evaluation.

*Information related to the Professional Support Personnel evaluation model and the figure and appendices used in this chapter are taken from Stronge, J. H., & Helm, V. M., Evaluating Professional Support Personnel in Education, 1991 by Sage Publications, Inc., and reprinted by permission. For a more in depth discussion of the material presented in the chapter, please refer to this source.*

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# APPENDIX A

## Sample
## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

## Sample
## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

Name ______________________ Job Title ______________________

1. Area of Responsibility: ______________________

A. Job Responsibility: ______________________

______________________

| Performance Indicators Product or Process | Standards for Satisfactory Performance | Method of Documentation | Documented Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

Rating of Job Responsibility: Excellent ___ Satisfactory ___ Unsatisfactory ___

B. Job Responsibility: ______________________

______________________

| Performance Indicators Product or Process | Standards for Satisfactory Performance | Method of Documentation | Documented Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

Rating of Job Responsibility: Excellent ___ Satisfactory ___ Unsatisfactory ___

## Evaluation Summary Sheet (cont'd)

Context of Evaluation - significant obstacles in achieving objectives (optional):

________________________________________

________________________________________

Commendations: ________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Recommendations for Improvement: ________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

____________________ Signature of Evaluator

__________ Date

Comments of Evaluatee: ____________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

____________________ Signature of Evaluatee

__________ Date

*Source: Stronge and Helm (1991).*

# APPENDIX B

## Sample
## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

## Sample

## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

Name ______________________ Job Title *Counselor*

I. Area of Responsibility: *Consultation*

A. Job Responsibility: *Presents instructional/informational program to groups of students, parents, teachers, and other school and community groups.*

| Performance Indicators Product or Process | Standard for Satisfactory Performance | Method of Documentation | Documented Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1. Conducts programs for improvement of student study skills.* | *Provides programming that reaches every freshman during fall semester and deemed "somewhat helpful" by 75 of students* | *Schedule of program; student evaluation results* | *Copy of programs; 80% found study skills "somewhat helpful" or "helpful"* |
| *2. Presents information about services offered by counseling department* | *Offers at least one program for parents and adequate programming to reach all students during academic year* | *Schedule, program notices, and written handouts* | *Parent meetings conducted; 100% of students notified at least once* |
| *3. Conducts teacher inservice based upon assessed need* | *Teacher inservice regarded as "helpful" or "informative" by 70% of teachers* | *Teacher survey* | *80% of teachers found program "helpful" or "informative"* |

Rating of Job Responsibility: Excellent____ Satisfactory____ Unsatisfactory____

Source: *Stronge and Helm (1991).*

# APPENDIX C

## Sample
## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

## Sample

## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

Name ______________________ Job Title *Resource/Consulting Teacher*

I. Area of Responsibility: *Consultation*

A. Job Responsibility: *Collaborates with regular education teachers to modify instructional and curricular expectations for special needs students.*

| Performance Indicators Product or Process | Standard for Satisfactory Performance | Method of Documentation | Documented Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1. Has thorough knowledge of students' strengths and disabilities* | *Summarizes students' abilities and disabilities in behavioral terms and identifies implications for instructional program* | *Regular education teacher survey* | *•90% found RC teacher's work "helpful"* |
| *2. Communicate knowledge of students to teachers* | *Communicates information to regular education teachers in such a way that they are able to contribute to the process of modification* | *Regular education teacher survey results; log of meetings* | *•90% found RC teacher's knowledge "helpful"; adequate amount of time for meeting and modeling*<br>*•90% found RC teacher's work "helpful";* |
| *3. Suggests instructional and curricular modifications* | *Modifications match student profile and curriculum demands and are feasible for classroom teacher* | *Regular education teacher survey results; Team meeting members' review of modifications* | *•modifications found appropriate by Team meeting members* |

Rating of Job Responsibility: Excellent____ Satisfactory____ Unsatisfactory____

Source: *Stronge and Helm (1991).*

# APPENDIX D

## Sample
## Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

## Sample

# Professional Support Personnel Evaluation Instrument

Name ______________________ Job Title *Speech and Language Therapist*

I. Area of Responsibility: *Testing*

A. Job Responsibility: *Screens student referrals for speech and hearing difficulties and provides summary recommendations to Team members*

| Performance Indicators Product or Process | Standard for Satisfactory Performance | Method of Documentation | Documented Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1. Administers screening devices to referred students* | *Screens students within two weeks of referral in an efficient but thorough manner* | *Log of referrals and disposition; calendar of appointments* | *•90% of referrals acted upon within two weeks; testing conducted within time allotted* |
| *2. Scores and compiles testing data* | *Scores tests consistent with professional standards* | *Test protocol* | *•Correctly scores and interprets test results per central office supervisor* |
| *3. Writes summary recommendations for IEP Team meeting* | *Generates 1-2 page summary of results which are meaningful for parents and classroom teachers and which indicates appropriate level of service* | *Representative survey of Team meeting members* | *•90% of Team meeting members rate input as helpful* |

Rating of Job Responsibility: Excellent____ Satisfactory____ Unsatisfactory____

Source: *Stronge and Helm (1991).*

END

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